ROBERT PARRY ON IRAN-CONTRA

In THESE TIMES

August 11-24, 1997



MARTHA HONEY REPORTS

Making the World Safe for U.S. Arms Merchants

0 74470 84146 3 30

$2.50/CANADA $3.50

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

EDITORIAL

THIRD PARTY DOLDRUMS

Last year, after it was too late to have any impact on the presidential or congressional elections, a slew of groups and a couple of prominent individuals on the left caught election fever. These quadrennials included the AFL-CIO, a group called Third Parties '96, the Green Party, Ralph Nader, the Labor Party and the Alliance for Democracy.

With the exception of the AFL-CIO, which ran a vigorous TV ad campaign and mobilized members in some districts in its attempt to win back a Democratic majority in the House, the efforts of these groups had no visible impact on either the presidential race or congressional contests.

This burst of activity around election time has become a time-honored ritual on the left. After lying dormant since the previous presidential election, groups and individuals on the left rush either to try to elect a president or congressional candidates of their own or, slightly more realistically, to influence the direction of the mainstream parties.

Of the 1995-96 crop of aspirants, the Alliance was the most quixotic. The group got its start from a manifesto that former *Texas Observer* editor Ronnie Dugger published in *The Nation* in August 1995. Dugger's call to action was appealing in its sweep. He predicted that 1996 would see four or five significant presidential candidates and "the smashup of the two-party system." Out of the ashes, he predicted, a new movement would spring up to "reclaim and reinvent democracy." This was not seen as a short-range project. Dugger proposed nothing less than a five- or 10-year campaign to reorganize the "many disparate [anti-corporate] associations and efforts into one new national movement." This campaign, he believed, would usher in "the first genuinely international democracy."

Like similar calls to action over the last half century, Dugger's effort enjoyed an early rush of support. Fifteen hundred people responded to his *Nation* article alone. Dugger envisioned a mass meeting of his new populists in St. Louis only three months after his article appeared. But, the Alliance instead followed the pattern of its predecessors: initial excitement over the attempt to create a new politics, and then, as it became clear that neither the principles nor the strategy had been well-thought out or tested in the electoral arena, a steady decline in attendance and interest.

Third Parties '96 followed a similar trajectory. Despite a lot more thought and a wider social base, the Labor Party, too, has lost steam. As became apparent early on, Nader's run for presidency was never serious. And the Greens' previous third-party efforts had already marginalized them.

This year, when any meaningful effort to develop a new left politics should be in full swing, little or nothing is happening. Even the AFL-CIO, which worked hard to change the face of Congress and held its nose to help re-elect Bill Clinton, has disappeared from the political scene. The federation is not visibly preparing to run candidates in the 1998 primaries, nor is it even putting forth a legislative agenda for those members of Congress whom it helped elect or those who might be inclined to pay attention to labor's needs.

With the exception of the New Party, last year's victims of election fever have slipped back into their comas.

Of last year's entrants in the political arena, only two seem to have the potential to grow and become visible on the national scene. The first is the Labor Party, which has a significant organizational base and a natural constituency. The party, however, has started out by mandating that it will not "endorse candidates of any kind" or "spend any Labor Party resources on electoral campaigns." At its convention in Cleveland last year, where this decision was made, many delegates left disappointed. "A labor party is to represent the interests of working people," said one delegate. "To Americans, that means in the electoral arena. We need to elect people to the House ... not just groups to pressure those now in office."

That leaves the New Party, which has been successfully running candidates for office for a few years, mostly in nonpartisan elections. So far, however, the New Party has not presented a national agenda, and with one exception—Rep. Danny Davis, a Chicago Democrat and New Party member who was elected last year—has concentrated on local and state offices. As we've suggested before, the New Party's approach seems to be the only one that provides the potential for the left to enter the mainstream of American political life with an agenda of its own. To do so, however, it will have to begin addressing the issues that affect all of us as a nation. ◀

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IN THESE TIMES
"...with liberty and justice for all"

Editor: James Weinstein
Executive Editor: Deidre McFadyen
Senior Editors: Joel Bleifuss, David Moberg, Salim Muwakkil
Culture Editor: Pat Arnow
Associate Editor: Dave Mulcahey
Assistant Editor: Craig Aaron
Contributing Editors: Patricia Aufderheide, Linda DeLibero, Miles Harvey, Diana Johnstone, Pete Kerman, Chris Lehmann, Fred Weir
Editorial Interns: Amanda Hiber, Ana Vargas, Norman Wishner

Art Director: Estelle Carol
Assistant Art Director: Jim Rinnert
Illustrators: Sheila Flinchpaugh, Torry LeBan

Publisher: Paul Obis
Associate Publisher: Beth Schulman
Assistant Publisher: Claudia Morris

Circulation Director: Jake Blankenship
Advertising Director: Patricia Gray

In These Times (ISSN 0160-5992) is published biweekly by the Institute for Public Affairs, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647. Subscriptions are $36.95 a year ($59 for institutions; $61.95 Canada; $75.95 overseas). Second-class postage paid at Chicago, IL and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *In These Times*, 303 E. Hitt St., Mt. Morris, IL 61054. This issue (Vol. 21, No. 19) published August 11, 1997, for newsstand sales August 11-24, 1997. (773) 772-0100. Member: Alternative Press Syndicate. The entire contents of *In These Times* are copyright ©1997 by the Institute for Public Affairs, and may not be reproduced in any manner, either in whole or in part, without permission of the publisher. Copies of *In These Times'* contract with the National Writers Union are available upon request. Complete issues and volumes of *In These Times* are available from University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, MI. All rights reserved. *In These Times* is indexed in both the Alternative Press Index and the Left Index. Publisher does not assume liability for unsolicited manuscripts or material. Manuscripts or material unaccompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelope will not be returned. All correspondence should be sent to: *In These Times*, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647. E-mail: itt@igc.apc.org. For customer service and to place subscription orders, call toll free: (800) 827-0270. Advertising rates sent on request. Available back issues are $5 each; specify volume and number. All letters received by *In These Times* become property of the newspaper. We reserve the right to print letters in condensed form.

COVER ©1997 ESTELLE CAROL

In THESE TIMES

CONTENTS

Volume 21, Number 19



Buy American
The Clinton administration helps U.S. arms dealers corner the global market.
MARTHA HONEY
14

Low-wage innovations
The Employer Group will do anything to keep their workers happy—except pay more.
CHRIS SEYMOUR
18

Lawrence Walsh on Iran-Contra
The story can now be told.
ROBERT PARRY
32

FEATURES

First Stone: Cuba at the crossroads • Joel Bleifuss 12
Whither black journalism? • Salim Muwakkil 21
Veggie-libel laws • Evan Halper 24
The new face of Europe's neofascism • Martin Lee 26
HMOs and unions • David Bacon 28
In the End: Eating in Philadelphia • John O'Neal 40

REVIEW

Film: *Career Girls* • Lawrence Levi 30
In Print: *Crack in America* • Jeffrey L. Reynolds 35

DEPARTMENTS

Letters 4
Sylvia · Nicole Hollander 4
In Short 6
Appall-O-Meter 7
The Big Picture · Marisa Acocella 8
Huge Mouth · Peter Hannan 11

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LETTERS

Keeping the faith

Annette Fuentes is right to be disappointed in Ruth Messinger's campaign for mayor of New York ("Look for the liberal label," July 14). When I lived in Washington Heights, Messinger—or at least her staff—was always there, on the right side, whenever issues such as the Audubon Ballroom redevelopment or transit cuts affected the people. I waited for her to run for mayor. Yet now that she is running, she seems to have forgotten why.

Fuentes notes that blacks and Latinos overwhelmingly prefer Messinger to Giuliani and warns that she must address their concerns. But Fuentes doesn't state the obvious corollary: Messinger slights blacks and Latinos in order to appeal to her main constituency, "progressive" whites. As Katha Pollitt pointed out in a recent column in *The Nation*, white liberals are not quite sure they want to share New York with "them." White denizens of the exclusive Upper West Side don't have much in common with dark-skinned teenagers who run from the police on upper Amsterdam Avenue. Indeed, the thought of one running down Riverside Drive would scare them out of their Birkenstocks if it weren't for the doorman.

Bad faith among liberals is not new. Messinger has simply fallen into the trap set by Bill Clinton and the Democratic Leadership Council. To win, she must not lead, but follow a core constituency of middle-class white Democrats who are too well-served by the status quo to remember why they called themselves "liberals" in the first place.

Wilfred Small
Urbana, Ill.

Bias against Israel

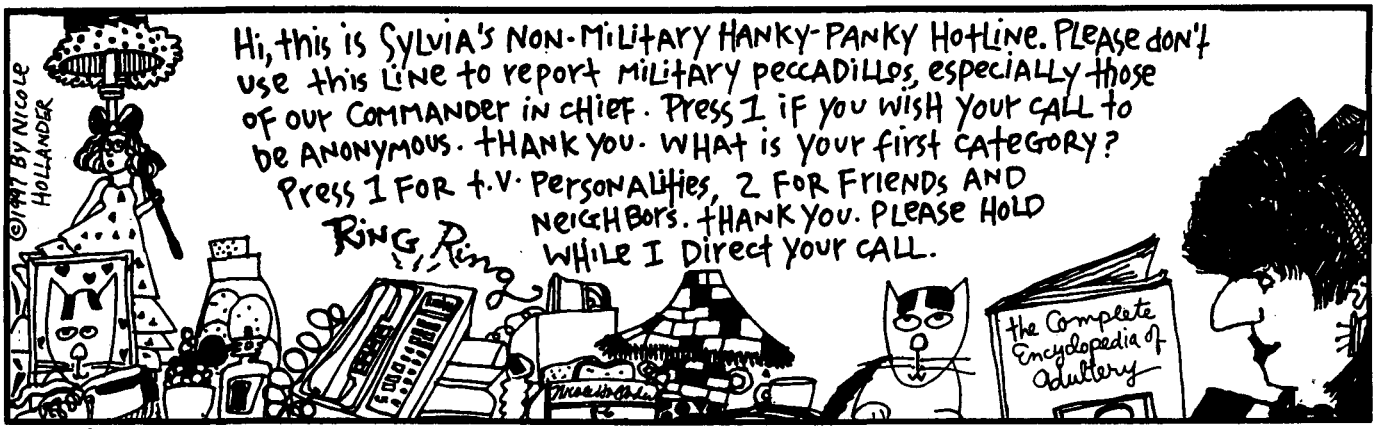
The article by Rashid Khalidi on the Middle East peace process ("A flawed peace," June 30) is remarkably biased against Israel. Nowhere is that more concisely demonstrated than by his statement that the United States gives $8 billion to Israel every year. His figure is ridiculous. The amounts "given" for tourism and investment are not gifts. They are normal fees for services rendered in the case of tourism and for purchases of Israeli assets and companies in return for profits in the case of investment. How much does Israel "give" to the rest of the world when it purchases foreign goods or invests in foreign firms? The loan guarantees aren't grants; they have to be repaid with interest. Finally, the amount of actual U.S. aid is less than it appears on first examination. Much of this aid is earmarked for purchases of U.S. military goods at inflated prices. Some also goes to repay high-interest loans from the United States that Israel could refinance at lower interest rates if it were free to do so.

Khalidi does not mention either the $2 billion in U.S. aid to Egypt, which has no strings attached, or any of the sums sent to Arab countries as aid, loans, investment or fees for goods and services. Khalidi's funny arithmetic clearly displays his prejudices.

Richard Solomon
Pasadena, Calif.

Rashid Khalidi responds: To my chagrin, I've learned that I was biased in my statement regarding U.S. funding of Israel—in Israel's favor. U.S. Ambassador to Israel Martin Indyk—who cannot conceivably be accused of the slightest bias against Israel—told the Wall Street Journal *on July 6, 1996 that U.S. government funding of Israel*

SYLVIA — by Nicole Hollander



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(not including the investment, tourism, trade, tax-deductible charity contributions and the many other extras) totals $13 billion in "loans, grants and loan guarantees." He also noted that the United States runs a billion-dollar deficit in its bilateral trade with Israel because of Israeli import barriers and "bureaucratic impediments that stand in the way of U.S. firms."

Solomon is correct that U.S. military aid has to be spent on U.S. products (this is true of every aid recipient, Egypt included). Aid to Israel, however, comes with fewer strings attached than that to any other country. Moreover, Israel is the biggest recipient of U.S. aid, getting fully one-third of the entire aid budget.

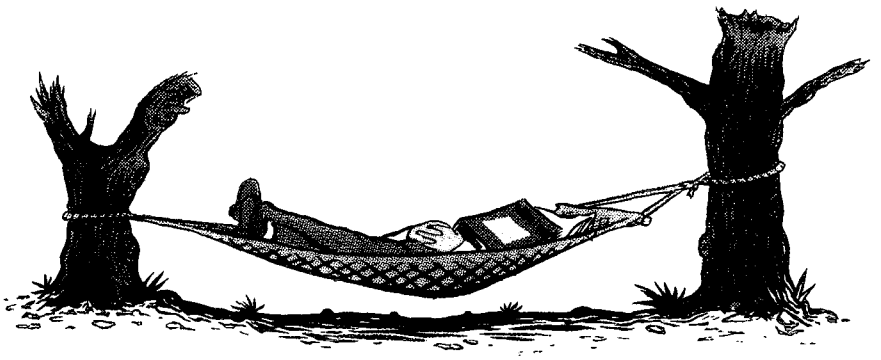
Solomon almost makes all that aid sound like a burden. I am sure that there are truly needy countries that could use the money if it proved too much of a hardship for Israel.

Testing the ban

Jim Wurst's piece on nuclear disarmament ("Back to zero," July 14) provided timely background for the "subcritical" underground nuclear test explosion in Nevada on July 2. This was the first in a series of six planned tests over the next two years. The program—estimated to cost $40 billion—is intended to determine whether aging nuclear weapons will still perform.

As Wurst pointed out, the tests may not violate the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which was signed by the president but not yet ratified by the Senate, because they do not create the critical mass needed to set off a chain reaction. The problem, however, is that the tests may undercut the willingness of other countries to ratify the treaty. On the day after the test, China announced that it had "taken notice of the U.S. start of underground nuclear weapons-related tests" and called on all signatories to abide by the test ban treaty. Critics also warn that the tests may be used to develop new weapons; U.S. officials, however, deny this.

A. Rice
Washington, D.C.



We're taking a break

Warren Burger, a former chief justice of the Supreme Court, customarily vacationed for two months each year on Martha's Vineyard. One day a reporter asked the justice how the court could recess two months each year, given the size and complexity of the United States.

"The court can do a year's work in 10 months," Burger reportedly replied, "but not in 12."

Periods of rest, reflection, retrenchment and renewal are as necessary for magazines—and the people who work for them—as they are for Supreme Court justices.

We at *In These Times* are taking a break during the month of August to immerse ourselves in editorial and strategic planning.

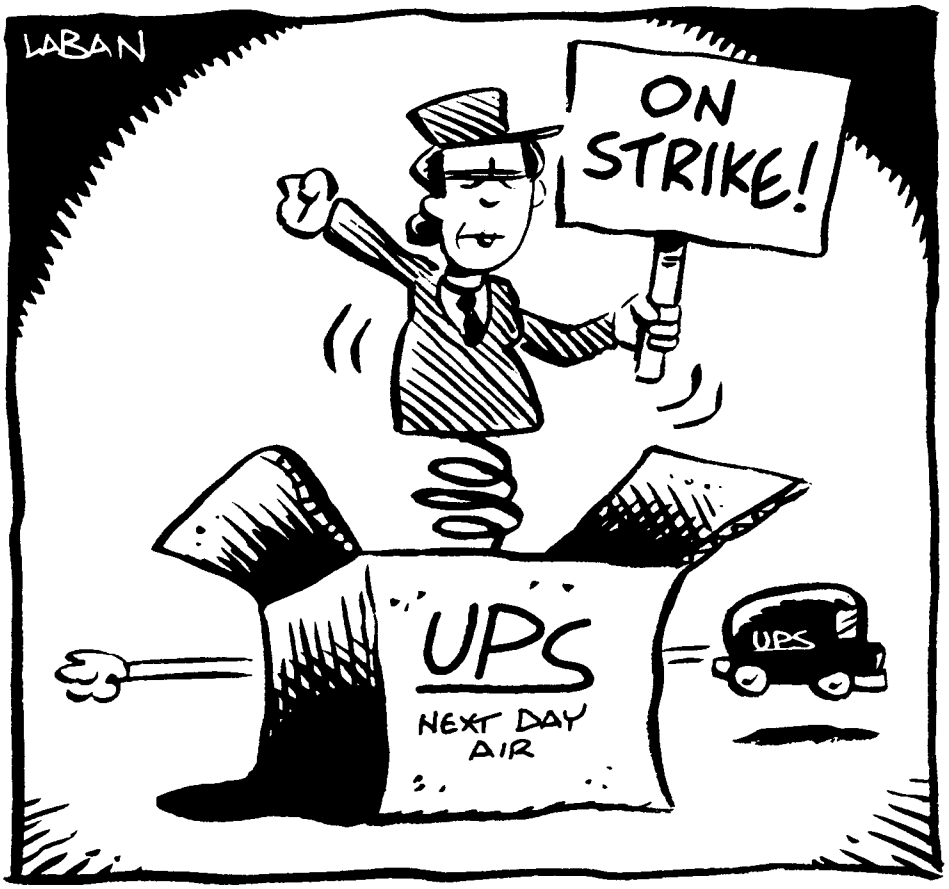
The magazine is on the threshold of a very exciting future. We have a new publisher who is committed to putting us on firmer financial footing. We are hiring a new art director who will help give us a long-overdue face-lift. And we're working on the launch of a new Web page, which will combine the best of *In These Times* with other dynamic features not found in the publication.

This issue will be the last that subscribers will receive before our hiatus. The break will not affect the number of issues that a subscriber receives. We'll return refreshed and with a new look with the September 22-October 5 issue. We'll see you then.

James Weinstein
Editor

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

InSHORT



© 1997 TERRY LABAN

Face-off at UPS

Angela Schenburn starts her day at a United Parcel Service distribution center in Madison Heights, Mich., at 3:40 a.m. as a preloader, packing boxes and Jiffy-bags into the trucks. Then she dons the regulation brown shirt and delivers packages. Schenburn logs more than 40 hours at UPS each week, but because she's working two different part-time jobs, she's paid a part-time rate.

She's a typical example of a national trend toward part-time jobs, a trend that has made UPS a target of the Teamsters union.

Contracts for 185,000 Teamsters at UPS—128,000 of them part-timers—expired July 31. The union is demanding that UPS convert a portion of these part-time jobs to full-time. The members voted by a 95 percent margin to strike, the union announced on July 15. Although the two sides agreed to keep talking, UPS escalated its demands for concessions as the deadline neared. Despite a record $1.15 billion profit last year, the company wants more part-timers and more outsourcing.

Until 1987, UPS used part-timers, many of them college students, only as the unseen sorters and loaders who worked evening and pre-dawn shifts to ready the trucks. Then the company expanded its Next Day Air operations to compete with non-union FedEx. To give the company a break as it entered the overnight delivery market, the Teamsters allowed the use of low-paid part-time drivers to deliver air packages and to shuttle parcels to the airport. The air operations are now the company's fastest-growing division.

Eighty-three percent of the new jobs created since 1993 have been part-time, but the starting rate for part-timers, $8 to $9 an hour, hasn't budged since 1982. Full-timers now make around $20 an hour. In contract talks, the company has offered a 90-cent increase phased in over seven years for all current workers but no increase at all in the starting wage for part-timers.

The Teamsters don't consider this a serious offer. They want to narrow the gap with full-timers. And because the air operations make the flow of work in the hubs virtually continuous, they maintain that it would be simple to combine the company's many overlapping four- and five-hour shifts into full-time assignments. More than 10,000 part-timers already work over 35 hours a week.

Schenburn, 38, says the stereotype of UPS part-timers as "college boys" no longer holds. "The work force has changed from young kids to fathers, husbands, wives," she says. "You join a company like UPS because you're willing to work hard for these wages if you can get a chance for a future. You can't support a family on $8 an hour, even if you were full-time."

Veteran driver Gary Clark of Pontiac, Mich., notes that full-timers have good reason to support the part-timers' demands. "The more you surround yourself with people working at eight bucks an hour, you're cutting your own

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

throat," Clark says. "It gives the company an incentive to get rid of you."

Who will win the face-off? Teamsters for a Democratic Union organizer Bob Machado believes that because of its neck-and-neck rivalry with FedEx, UPS is "incredibly vulnerable." The company knows it can't recruit and train 180,000 scabs, he says. On the other hand, the Teamsters' strike fund is too small to last long.

Schenburn is ready to strike. "Most people have another job anyway," she says. "You have to have two jobs just to survive. Most people would rather strike, and maybe we'll make it so we only have to have one job to survive."

—Jane Slaughter

Back to basics in Hong Kong

With the handover of Hong Kong to China on July 1, a new political struggle has begun. It's workers against owners—with a twist.

Following the rise of Communist China, Hong Kong's labor movement directed much of its energy to the struggle against British colonial rule. Once the Cultural Revolution ended and the British decided to localize Hong Kong rule, however, the labor movement became increasingly focused on bread-and-butter issues. Still, it saw its opponents as the business elite and the British.

Now that situation has changed. Where Hong Kong's tycoons once depended on the British to buttress their power, they have now allied themselves with China's Communist leaders. In return, Beijing named many of these figures to the Provisional Legislative Council, which replaced the elected legislature as part of the takeover.

Among the members of the ousted legislature were a number of labor leaders from teachers' unions, nurses' organizations and the independent International Confederation of Trade Unions (CTU). Forced onto the street, these activists now plan to campaign the old-fashioned way for civil and workers' rights in the Special Administrative Region. "I'm not out of work," says former legislator and CTU executive director Lee Cheuk-yan. "Now I just focus my job in the labor movement. We're going to organize!"

The rapidly growing CTU represents around 150,000 workers. It's slightly smaller but far more militant than its rival, the pro-Beijing Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions (FTU). Between the two organizations, 10 percent to 12 percent of the local work force is now unionized.

Hong Kong's labor activists didn't wait for the handover to begin their new struggle. The democratic legislature passed five pro-labor bills during its final session. Those bills granted unions the right to bargain collectively on wage and benefit issues and the right to represent workers based on a vote of

Continued on page 9

© 1997 TERRY LABAN

APPALL-O-METER

THE *IN THESE TIMES* INDEX OF INDECENCIES



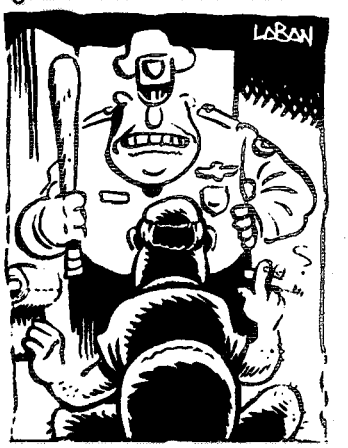
By David Futrelle

Sorry excuse 6.3

One of the army's best-known generals has been sent to sensitivity training—but to hear some tell it, it's as though he'd been asked to surrender his troops to Saddam Hussein. The general in question is Amos Halftrack, the lecherous cartoon commander in the comic strip "Beetle Bailey." In a recent episode of the strip, the recovering lecher—who used to spend a good portion of his time ogling the unnaturally buxom Miss Buxley—finally apologized to the women on his staff for his behavior. "It's just that I grew up with certain words and attitudes I thought were okay," he said. "I'm sorry." Some less sensitive observers are up in arms about this small mea culpa. "I hope they don't ruin the comic strip by excessive political correctness," complains Elaine Donnelly, president of the Center for Military Readiness. As it is, she adds, Halftrack's reformation is "going to have the same demoralizing effect on the military as what's going on now."

Butts in the air 7.1

Scenes from the smoking wars, Part I: Thinking of lighting up in flight? Don't do it if you're traveling Air France. One unfortunate international traveler, whom flight attendants suspected of sneaking a puff in the toilet on a flight from Paris to Newark, was recently pulled from the can in the midst of a rather delicate cleanup operation, sans pants. He and his lawyer are not pleased, the *New York Observer* reports. "Whatever happened to knocking on the door and saying, 'Sir, please come out'?" the lawyer complained.



Toxic smoke is good for you 7.3

Scenes from the smoking wars, Part II: In Japan, meanwhile, things are looking a little brighter for nicotine addicts and their suppliers. More than half of Japanese adult men are smokers, and cigarette consumption among young women is skyrocketing. The Japanese government's reaction to the dangers of smoking has been blasé, which may have something to do with the fact that it owns two-thirds of the stock in Japan Tobacco, which has near-monopolistic control over the market. For their part, Japan Tobacco executives aren't exactly losing sleep over their country's habit. "We do acknowledge some health risk caused by smoking," a spokesman for the company recently told The Associated Press, "but we also think it offers some psychologically positive effects."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE BIG PICTURE

SHE by Marisa Acocella



SHE ©1996 MARISA ACCOCELLA ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Continued from page 7

the members of a work unit. The legislature also passed measures extending job-discrimination protection to deaf workers and declaring May 1 a workers' holiday.

Following the takeover, various business organizations and the tycoons, who now hold the majority of seats in the provisional council, made a bid to cancel the five ordinances on the grounds that they would "hurt Hong Kong's competitiveness." As the new legislature discussed a cancellation measure, the independent labor movement swung into action, gathering tens of thousands of signatures in support of the five new laws. Meanwhile, Lee began a five-day protest fast at a prominent tourist spot, the Star Ferry Pier.

In the end, the legislature upheld the bills protecting deaf workers and declaring the May holiday, but to allow time for more "consideration," it froze the laws granting workers the right to organize. Forced to choose between supporting the tycoons against the workers or breaking ranks with the pro-China administration, FTU representatives in the legislature abstained from voting for the freeze.

Labor activists and the broader democracy movement plan to use street demonstrations, rallies and door-to-door campaigning to highlight the pro-business stance of the new government and to force the FTU and the Democratic Association for the Betterment of Hong Kong (DAB), another pro-China party, to stop blindly backing government policies. Both of these parties will need the support of the working class in elections promised for next May or June.

The success of the labor movement's new street protest strategy will put Hong Kong's promised autonomy to the test. If it succeeds in splitting the pro-Beijing factions, hardliners in China may be tempted to interfere directly. But for now, Beijing's only option is to combat Hong Kong's restive workers through its proxies, the Hong Kong business elite—a situation that must have Mao Zedong spinning in his mausoleum. —Dave Lindorff

Free speech not sludge, says judge

IN JUNE, THE 5TH U.S. CIRCUIT COURT OF APPEALS OVERTURNED A LIBEL judgment that had awarded $5 million to a Long Island-based sewage disposal outfit for statements made in a 1994 episode of *TV Nation*, Michael Moore's short-lived documentary program. The company, Merco Joint Venture, sent New York City sewage sludge to a small Texas town as fertilizer, prompting a *TV Nation* segment entitled "Sludge Train." In the piece, the Environmental Protection Agency's Hugh Kaufman, a longtime whistle blower, characterized Merco as an "illegal haul-and-dump operation masquerading as an environmentally beneficial project." Merco sued. The 5th Circuit, one of the most conservative appeals courts in the nation, ruled that TriStar Television, producer of *TV Nation*, and Kaufman were not liable "because they refused to corroborate the Merco party line. Defamation law should not be used as a threat to force individuals to muzzle their truthful, reasonable opinions and beliefs." Kaufman says that the ruling puts "a stick in the spokes of the Clinton EPA policy to promote growing food on poison." —Joel Bleifuss

Russian roulette

Another piece has fallen into place in a scandal involving high-level Russian government officials and Harvard consultants responsible for "reforming" Russia's economy. On July 1, the Russian daily *Izvestia* reported that First Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Anatoly Chubais, Russia's leading "young reformer," netted more than $290,000 in interest last year on what appears to be a $2.5 million bribe.

The scandal broke in May, when the U.S. Agency for International Development (U.S.AID) suspended and then terminated a five-year, $57 million contract with the Harvard Institute for International Development (HIID) to advise and coordinate Russian economic reforms. At issue were charges that HIID director Andrei Shleifer and Moscow field director Jonathan Hay had misused U.S.AID resources and engaged in insider trading (see "The reform racket," June 30).

Hay acknowledged that in early 1996, while working as an adviser to the government, he had invested in GKOs, extremely high-yielding Russian treasury bonds that can be purchased by invitation only. But Chubais indignantly defended Shleifer and Hay and denounced an investigation begun by U.S.AID as inspired by forces hostile to Russian economic reform.

It now appears that Chubais' real concern was that the U.S.AID inquiry would reveal his own involvement in the same scheme. On February 29, 1996, according to *Izvestia*, Chubais signed an agreement with Stolichny Bank for a five-year, interest-free, no-collateral "loan" of $2.5 million to the Center for the Defense of Private Property, a front organization that Chubais set up on the HIID model. It funneled the money through another front (this one set up by Arkady Yevstafyev, a member of Chubais' clique later caught leaving Yeltsin's campaign headquarters with $500,000 cash in a Xerox box) to something called Montes Auri Corp., which in turn put it in GKOs. Interest on the bonds was deposited in the personal bank accounts of Chubais, Yevstafyev and Andrei Trapeznikov, Chubais' press secretary.

Interest-free loans, explains the Arthur Andersen accounting firm, are internationally regarded as "unequivocal bribes." In December 1995, two months before it made the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

loan, Stolichny Bank was part of a consortium granted a controlling stake in Sibneft, one of Russia's largest oil companies, in the loans-for-shares program Chubais directly controlled. At the time Chubais signed for the money, he was temporarily out of government and working for HIID as a consultant for Shleifer and Hay (previously his consultants). By mid-March, however, he was back as the head of Yeltsin's re-election campaign and extremely well-placed to influence GKO interest rates. Last November, with Chubais essentially in charge of the Russian government while Yeltsin had heart surgery, Stolichny was awarded control of the state-owned Agroprombank, one of Russia's largest banks.

Chubais doesn't deny any of this; he merely claims that he has done nothing illegal. "An interest-free loan," he wrote in response to *Izvestia* on July 5, "is absolutely normal ... in both Russia and any democratic country." Any seeming impropriety, he added, was sheer scandal-mongering by "anti-reform political forces."

Chubais then left Moscow on vacation. Another crony, Vladimir Potanin, who had acquired a controlling interest in *Izvestia*, fired its editor. The rest of the Russian press fell silent. The World Bank and the European Bank for Recovery and Development, which have open lines of credit to Stolichny, had no comment. Harvard development experts Jeffrey Sachs and Andrei Shleifer, who promoted Chubais with U.S.AID and gave him the professional respectability and resources to achieve his current position, have not disassociated themselves from him. The Western press evidently doesn't want to know.

—Dorothy Rosenberg

Turkey's soft coup

As they have done three times since World War II, the generals of NATO's second largest army decided in June to "save" Turkish democracy from itself. Unlike the coups of 1960, 1971 and 1980, however, there were no tanks in the streets or martial music on the radio this time—just a few quiet meetings at Cankaya Mansion, the Turkish White House, and a few discreet calls from the barracks.

On June 18, Turkish President Suleyman Demirel accepted the resignation of Turkey's first Islamist-led government, headed by Necmettin Erbakan and his Welfare Party (Refah). In fact, Erbakan had suspected Demirel was under pressure from the military for months and hoped his own sudden resignation would force the president to appoint Erbakan's coalition partner, Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller of the centrist True Path Party, as his replacement. It did not work out that way. In defiance of political precedent and constitutional mandate, Demirel bypassed Ciller and asked

See Dick strike. Strike, Dick, strike.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN CALIFORNIA ARE BEING EXPLOITED BY UNSCRUPULOUS EMPLOYERS, THANKS TO THE Labor in the Schools Committee of the California Federation of Teachers (CFT). The committee has recently begun piloting "The Yummy Pizza Company" program, a set of lesson plans that puts students to work in their own pizza-making enterprise. As they experience life as workers on the Yummy Pizza assembly line, students are introduced to run-of-the-mill forms of exploitation, such as new company rules that forbid workers to speak to each other or take bathroom breaks.



©1997 KIT BOYCE

The curriculum aims to teach students about the world of work and to acquaint them with the ways that unions can help resolve conflict, says Fred Glass, communications director for the CFT and staff liaison to the Labor in the Schools Committee. In addition to the Yummy Pizza program, the committee also offers a labor-studies resource guide for teachers and the "Golden Lands, Working Hands" project, a history of the California labor movement for high school students.

Students respond well to labor-studies curricula, according to elementary and high school teachers who have used them. "High school students often think they have rights in the work place that they just don't have," says Linda Tubach, a Los Angeles teacher and a member of the Labor in the Schools Committee. "It's a shock when I have them read the Constitution carefully, and they see that they're only protected from the government, not employers. Once they realize their rights are limited, they take to the idea of unions very well."

—Amanda Hiber

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mesut Yilmaz, head of the center-right Motherland Party, to form the Turkish Republic's 55th government.

The recent "soft coup" was hardly, as many observers conclude, a genuine effort to defend the secular Turkish state against the establishment of an Islamist, anti-democratic government in Ankara. In the first place, Refah's domestic Islamist agenda largely consisted of symbolic gestures, such as supporting Koranic schools, permitting—though not forcing—women government officials to wear the veil to work, and proposing to change the official day of rest from Sunday to Friday. Moreover, the party's popular support has always been weak. It garnered only 21 percent of the ballots in the last national elections of 1995, and much of that was a protest vote.

So why did the military step in, knowing (as it must have) that a coup would further jeopardize Turkey's chances to join the European community, a goal close to the heart of much of the military brass and most secular politicians, including Yilmaz and Demirel?

The answer is as old as the foundations of the Turkish Republic itself and as contemporary as the latest twists of Middle East politics. Ever since the Gulf War, Turkey's military leaders have positioned their country as the second pillar, alongside Israel, of the United States' double-containment policy against Iraq and Iran. Turkish military bases are currently being used by U.S. military planes in Operation Poised Hammer, which provides air cover for the Kurdish safe haven in northern Iraq.

In exchange, the United States has forgiven some of Turkey's enormous foreign debt, funneled billions of dollars worth of weapons and turned a blind eye to Turkish military incursions into northern Iraq in hot pursuit, supposedly, of Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) rebels operating there. Indeed, while the West was focused on the political dance in Ankara in June, Turkey sent 20,000 troops into Iraq—its largest invasion in two years.

According to many close observers, such maneuvers have less to do with extirpating the PKK (which has backed away from its demands for national independence) than with advancing grander territorial designs on northern Iraq. According to Vera Beaudin Saeedpour, a longtime Turkey observer and head of the Kurdish Library in Brooklyn, N.Y., Turkish officials now talk of establishing a joint pro-Turkish administration of compliant Kurds, Assyrians and ethnically-related Turcomans for the oil-, water- and grain-rich safe haven.

Meanwhile, the Turkish military has been sidling up to Israel. In the last few years, military strategists from both countries have been coordinating their efforts, and Ankara has gone into several joint weapons-production deals with Jerusalem. In part, says Michael Amitay of the Washington, D.C.-based Kurdish Institute, such deals are a way to get around the U.S. Congress, which, under pressure from the powerful Greek and Armenian lobbies, has been making noises about imposing sanctions against weapons sales to Turkey.

Erbakan's ouster has given the Turkish military renewed confidence. As Amitay says, Turkish military officials know that as long as they play up the Islamist threat, "they'll get a wink and a nod from Washington and Europe."

—James Ciment

Contributors

Jane Slaughter writes for *Labor Notes* in Detroit.

Dave Lindorff is a frequent contributor to *In These Times* from Southeast Asia.

Dorothy Rosenberg, a research fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies, is currently working in Moscow.

James Ciment is the author of *The Kurds: State and Minority in Turkey, Iraq and Iran* (Facts on File, 1996).

THE ADVENTURES OF A HUGE MOUTH By Peter Hannan



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE FIRST STONE

90 miles away

By Joel Bleifuss
HAVANA

On a recent trip to Cuba, I was lucky enough to glimpse Fidel Castro on his way into Havana—or at least the six black Mercedes with tinted glass in which he and his entourage ride. As he sped down Fifth Avenue, along the ocean, I wondered if he was troubled by the young prostitutes waiting to be picked up by tourists from the nearby hotels. Did he wax nostalgic as he passed the now decrepit Russian embassy, a folly to central planning designed to withstand a Soviet winter, not Cuba's endless summer? Did he notice the kids heading to the shore, with T-shirts, swimming trunks and towels emblazoned with the stars and stripes of the neighbor to the north?

Such scenes remind us that, despite the wedge driven so deeply between the United States and Cuba in the last four decades, our histories are profoundly entwined. The Cuban flag, with its star on a field of blue and its red and white stripes, is a vestige of the 19th century, when some in the Cuban independence movement sought statehood as an alternative to Spanish domination. Both countries revel in mythic histories. We have George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and the self-made man. Cubans have José Martí, Che Guevara and the selfless revolutionary.

Cuba is only now recovering from disastrous policies spearheaded by Che Guevara that completely centralized the economy, expropriated the farms of landed peasants and abandoned incentives to labor such as overtime pay and merit-based raises. In 1968, the government outlawed all individual enterprises, including restaurants, auto-repair shops, beauty parlors and shoe-shine stands. The damage caused by this evisceration of small business, coupled with the U.S. embargo, was for many years ameliorated by the support Cuba received from the Soviet bloc, which bought sugar at above-market prices and provided oil at a bargain rate.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in the late '80s sent the Cuban economy into a tailspin. The country entered what the government termed a "special period." To pull itself out of this depression, Cuba now promotes tourism, courts foreign investment and is grudgingly allowing the revival of a small business sector. But this cure has troubling side effects: Cuba is becoming a two-tiered society of those who have dollars and those who don't.

The average worker in Cuba makes about 240 pesos a month (the equivalent of $10). In addition, the government provides everyone with rations of food, tobacco and basic household supplies. Rationed food is generally of poor quality, but still edible. Better food can be bought with Cuban pesos in the private farmers' markets, which the government opened in response to the August 1994 riots in Central Havana. Yet by Cuban standards, even these markets are expensive. For example, three avocados cost 24 pesos, or 10 percent of an average monthly wage.

Cubans can make material life a little more bearable by getting their hands on dollars. In many cases, this means that one has family in the United States who sends money. (Cubans who followed Castro's orders and cut their ties to American relatives are out of luck and justifiably bitter.) The other way to get dollars is to work in the "dollar sector" of the economy, which includes tourist hotels, gas stations and shops that accept only U.S. currency. How exactly a Cuban waiter or clerk, who is still paid in pesos, gets hold of those dollars is a matter of circumspection. Cubans with dollars can go to a dollar store, where the prices are similar to that of a 7-11, and buy products like Oreos and Coke that are not available in peso markets.

Another way Cubans can get by is to work for one of the country's vast state-run enterprises whose goods are valuable on the black market. A worker in a dairy, for example, can siphon milk or milk products, which, in addition to providing black-market income, help feed his or her family.

While the government does not sanction the endemic black market, it tacitly accepts it. Corruption in Cuba, though, is not on the same scale as in the rest of Latin America. Cases of excessive personal enrichment by high officials have been harshly and publicly punished. Yet Cuba, like Russia, has developed a classic apparatchik culture, where people in high positions have cars, better food, good housing, beach-front vacation homes, servants and the like.

Perhaps the most notable change in Cuba during the special period has been the explosive growth in prostitution. According to some estimates, 80 percent of the tourists—both men and women—who come to Havana from Europe and North America are looking for sex. Because the sex trade is so widespread and cuts across class lines, it carries little social stigma. Were the state to crack down, tourism—Cuba's number-one industry—would dry up. Prostitutes and their families are not the only ones who "benefit" from

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the sex trade. Policemen, hotel security officials and hotel workers all get their cut.

Another way people in Havana earn dollars is by renting rooms to tourists. An estimated 20 percent of visitors to Cuba stay in private homes. But this July, a new rent law went into effect requiring anyone who rents to pay a $100 or $200 monthly tax (depending on the location) for each room rented. The tax must be paid year-round, even in the off-season when tourists are scarce. If strictly enforced—and popular outrage may force the government to back down—the tax will drive many hoteliers out of business.

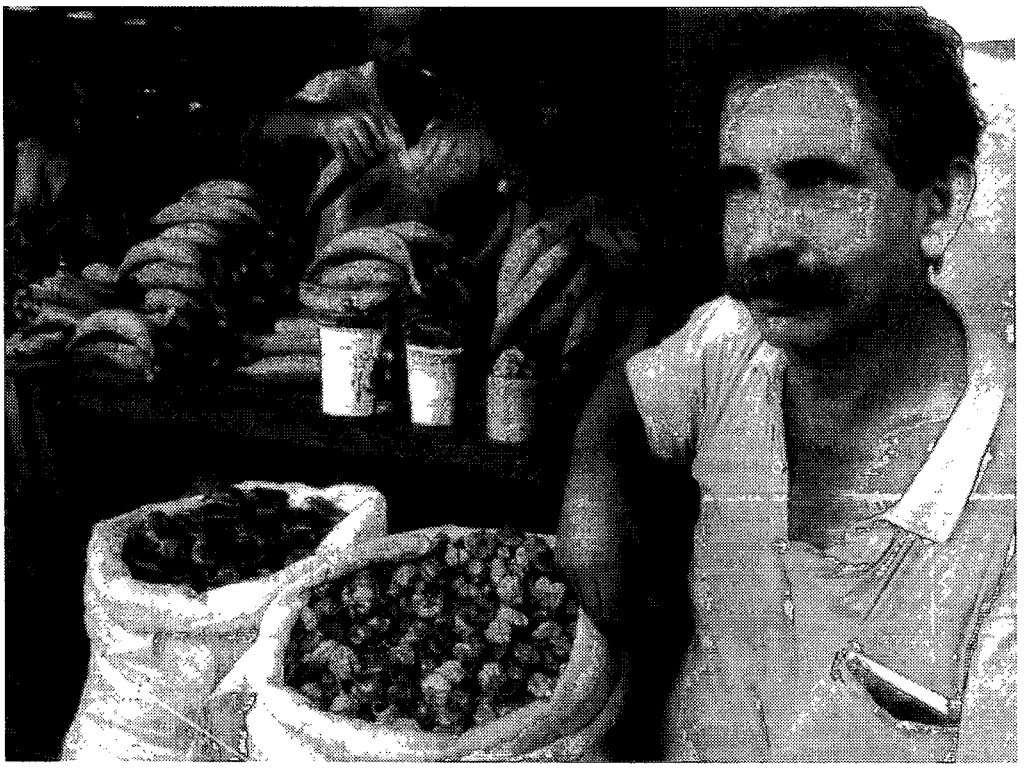
Defenders of the rent tax maintain that the government must have some way to tax income in order to support Cuba's beleaguered social welfare system. Taxation would also hinder the development of a dual class system in which a minority with access to dollars is much better off than the majority.

Yet it is just as clear that the Cuban government is imposing this hefty tax because it is suspicious of, indeed hostile to, all business operations that compete with state enterprises. To give a small but telling example, a couple of years ago a booming street-vending trade in homemade ice cream was drawing customers away from the state-owned street stands. In response, the government imposed a high tax, which drove most vendors out of business. Today homemade ice cream is sold surreptitiously, often by women sitting along the street hiding an ice cream bucket under a long skirt.

While the poorest neighborhoods in Havana may lack running water, they display few of the signs of social decay visible in urban America. I pushed my son in a stroller through the streets of Central Havana, the city's poorest section, concerned only about the trucks, cars, bicycles and people emptying buckets out of their windows. I wouldn't do the same in some parts of Chicago. In the Havana streets I visited, I saw a sense of neighborliness unlike anything in the United States. Ditto for racial harmony. In what American city do you find groups of teenage boys—white and black—hanging out on a corner, or cruising down the street, three to a bicycle? And consider the demographics. No other Latin American nation ensures the minimum standard of living, health care and education enjoyed by everyone in Cuba.

Moreover, people in Havana are visibly better off now than they were when I visited two years ago. The Cuban economy grew by an impressive 7 percent in both 1995 and 1996. Fewer folks are raising chickens in their backyard or baking cakes to peddle door to door. People are skinny but not emaciated. There are three times as many cars on the once deserted streets. Today, 24 Cuban pesos will buy $1, a significant improvement over the 1995 rate of 35 to 1. Yet many basic necessities remain beyond the reach of most people.

The Cuban government blames its economic woes on the United States. Undoubtedly, the U.S. economic war has vastly depressed the average person's standard of living. Yet most Cubans I talked to believe that Castro needs the embargo to justify the present state of affairs. The embargo shields the chronically inefficient and technologically outdated state enterprises. And it provides the hard-liners in the Cuban government with a pretext to crack down on independent political expression.



©1997 STEVE CAGAN

Produce in the private farmers' markets is plentiful but expensive.

As for the loss of Russian support, that too is the fault of the United States, if we are to believe *Granma*, Cuba's daily newspaper. After all, according to *Granma*, Mikhail Gorbachev was a CIA double agent. In a country that desperately needs a vigorous public debate about the direction it should take, *Granma* is a caricature of Communist propaganda. Ironically, each issue sells out. Before dawn, people line up to buy two copies: one to sell and the other to keep for toilet paper. ◁

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WEAPONS

Guns 'R' Us

The Clinton administration is helping U.S. arms dealers corner the global market.

By Martha Honey

On June 7, the House unanimously approved, by voice vote, the Arms Transfer Code of Conduct. If enacted, the code would significantly change the rules of the game for arms exports.

U.S. arms dealers currently sell $10 billion in weapons to non-democratic governments each year, according to Caleb Rossiter, director of the Demilitarization for Democracy project. Dubbed the "No Arms to Dictators" bill, the code would prohibit U.S. commercial arms sales or military aid and training to foreign governments that are undemocratic, abuse human rights or engage in aggression against neighboring states. The president, who will have the authority to make these determinations, can exempt undemocratic countries on the grounds of national security, but Congress has eight months to overturn any waivers.

The bill faces a number of legislative hurdles before becoming law. Nevertheless, the House vote was an important victory for a coalition of some 300 grassroots, religious and Washington-based advocacy groups that have taken on the powerful weapons industry and its government allies. Over the past five years, the doves have put together a broad congressional coalition, exemplified by the code's co-sponsors, liberal Cynthia McKinney (D-GA) and conservative Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA).

A White House speech writer under Reagan, Rohrabacher has softened his views since the end of the Cold War. "We have a higher standard of morality now," he told the *Orange County Weekly*. "With the [Cold] War over, there's no excuse for selling weapons to regimes that will use them to repress their own people."

Yet ironically, the Clinton Administration is moving in the opposite direction. Arguing that arms exports are a boon to the U.S. economy, the president, along with the Defense, Commerce and State departments, is aggressively promoting the arms industry at every opportunity. During 1993, Clinton's first year in office and the peak of the post-Gulf War arms-buying frenzy, U.S. foreign military contracts soared to $36 billion, a level unprecedented during the Cold War and more than double what Bush approved in 1992. By 1995, U.S. government-negotiated sales had leveled off at between $9 billion and $13 billion a year.

The United States, Britain, Russia, France and China dominate today's $32 billion global arms trade. But the United States has pulled out in front. According to the U.S. government's own estimates, Washington's share of the business jumped from 16 percent in 1988 to 50 percent between 1992 and 1994. The sky seems to be the limit. According to a 1995 Pentagon forecast, the United States accounts for 63 percent of worldwide arms deals already signed for the period between 1994 and 2000.

The Clinton administration has accelerated arms exports despite the global downturn in military production and defense budgets since the end of the Cold War. After peaking in 1987, world military spending dropped 40 percent to $811 billion in 1996, the lowest since 1966, according to the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

The overall U.S. military budget is one-third smaller than at its peak in the mid-'80s. In real terms, however, U.S. defense spending is still higher than during the Carter administration. Rather than embark on a serious program of defense cuts and economic conversion—the illusory "peace dividend" promised with the end of the Cold War—the Clinton administration is phasing out its conversion programs, opting instead to help boost the profits of military manufacturers through overseas sales.

The foreign policy risks of escalating arms exports are

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

enormous. Most U.S. weaponry is sold to the Middle East and other strife-torn regions, helping to fan the flames of war instead of promoting stability. More than 40 percent of the international sales of major conventional weapons between 1984 and 1994 went to nations at war such as Iraq, Somalia and Sudan, according to the United Nations Development Program's *1994 Human Development Report*. Civilians are increasingly the major victims of war. They accounted for half of all war deaths during the first half of this century, 64 percent in the '60s and 74 percent in the '80s. The share of civilian casualties appears to be higher still in the '90s.

The United States has been a major arms supplier to nations at war. Since 1985, participants in 45 ongoing conflicts received over $42 billion worth of U.S. weapons, according to a 1995 World Policy Institute report. Among the major conflicts in 1993 and 1994, 90 percent involved one or more parties that had received U.S. weapons or military technology prior to the outbreak of fighting.



International arms sales also put U.S. troops based around the world at growing risk. In discussing this so-called "boomerang effect," the CIA's Nonproliferation Center noted in 1995 that "the acquisition of advanced conventional weapons and technologies by hostile countries could result in significant casualties being inflicted on U.S. forces or regional allies." In fact, the last five times that the United States has sent troops into conflict—in Panama, Iraq-Kuwait, Somalia, Haiti and Bosnia—American forces faced adversaries that had previously received U.S. weapons, military technology or training.

The Pentagon and defense contractors then turn around and use the presence of advanced U.S. weapons in foreign arsenals to justify increased spending on new leading-edge weapons back home so that the United States can maintain its military superiority. For instance, the export of F-15 and F-16 tactical fighters to U.S. allies in Europe, Asia and the Middle East is being used to justify the development of the F-22, the "next generation" fighter that has already cost taxpayers $16 billion. Air Force officials are already proposing F-22 production costs be offset through overseas sales of the plane, which will undoubtedly provoke calls for yet another new fighter.

But it's NATO expansion, the foreign policy centerpiece of Clinton's second term, that offers the biggest potential bonanza for U.S. weapons exporters. U.S. arms dealers are salivating at the prospect of the new states upgrading and retrofitting their militaries with Western weapons and equipment.

"The stakes are high," Joel Johnson of the Aerospace Industries Association told the *New York Times*. "Whoever gets in first will have a lock for the next quarter-century." It's no coincidence that the globe-trotting president of the U.S. Committee to Expand NATO is Bruce Jackson, whose other hat is director of strategic planning at Lockheed Martin, which wants its F-16 fighters to replace Central Europe's Soviet MIG-21s.

A bipartisan group of 20 senators, including Jesse Helms (R-NC) and Patrick Leahy (D-VT), took issue with President Clinton's contention that "NATO expansion is in our national interests." In a joint letter, the senators expressed doubts about forcing these relatively poor, fledgling democracies "to spend money on arms, when expenditures for the infrastructure critical to economic growth are more pressing." The letter promises "intense" debate about NATO expansion in the Senate, which must ratify new NATO members by a two-thirds vote.

Arms merchants and their Pentagon flacks are leaving no stone unturned in their export drive. The United States is contemplating the removal of a 20-year U.S. ban on sales of advanced fighter aircraft to Latin America. Imposed during the Carter administration when military dictators ruled most of the region, proponents of lifting the ban argue that with the end of the Cold War and the revival of democracy in most of Latin America, countries like Chile or Brazil should be allowed to buy F-16s if they want them.

In a declaration issued at a Carter Center meeting in April, former Costa Rican president Oscar Arias warned that lifting the ban would suck up money better spent on human development programs and derail international efforts to ratchet down military spending in volatile regions. Arguing that the removal of the ban "could undermine regional military balances or stimulate an arms race," Sens. Joseph Biden (D-DE) and Christopher Dodd (D-CT) introduced a bill in July to extend the export moratorium for another two years. Clinton is expected to make a decision after he visits Latin America in October.

Given that international arms sales exacerbate conflicts and drain scarce resources from developing countries, why does the Clinton administration push them so vigorously? The official answer is, most often, jobs. But the government's own studies reveal that this rationale doesn't hold much water. The Office of Management and Budget estimates that for every 100 jobs created by weapons exports, 41 are lost in non-military U.S. firms that must compete with foreign companies that were granted access to the U.S. market in indirect payment for weapons purchases. U.S.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The NRA goes global

With the domestic gun market flat and the National Rifle Association under attack at home, the U.S. gun lobby is looking to expand its markets, influence elections and block gun-control legislation abroad.

In June, the NRA spearheaded the founding of the World Forum on the Fate of Sports Shooting Activities, a united front of 22 shooting groups and trade associations worldwide. Gun owners' associations from Europe, the United States and South Africa each pay a $3,000 annual membership fee. The NRA's chief lobbyist Tanya Metaksa told the *New York Times* that the World Forum seeks to build "the united voice of the shooting community, the gun-owning community. We're hopeful we can have influence at the United Nations and some influence with our own government and preclude some kind of treaty" that might restrict firearms.

The NRA has become a registered NGO at the United Nations and the European Union, permitting it to monitor and lobby international forums. The NRA has set its sights on at least seven different U.N. initiatives to control gun manufacturers, exporters and owners worldwide. U.N. agencies have labeled gun violence a public health crisis. Colombia, Mexico, India and Russia, amony others, have blamed lax U.S. laws for the guns that are flooding their countries. Thomas Mason, international lobbyist for both the World Forum and the NRA, complained in a *New York Times* interview that he finds the U.N. "very, very uptight about the NRA."

As it does at home, the NRA is targeting politicians abroad. The NRA has contributed to gun lobbyist associations in Australia and New Zealand to help defeat pro-gun control candidates in the wake of the 1996 shotgun slaughter of 35 tourists in Tasmania.

The NRA is also seeking to win the hearts and minds of the world's children through the distribution of its comic book, "Eddie Eagle," which purports to teach gun safety. —M.H.

arms exporters are also increasingly negotiating "offset" agreements, which sweeten the pot for foreign buyers by sending production (technologies and jobs) overseas along with American weapons. Even as U.S. arms exports soar, some 2.2 million defense industry workers lost their jobs between 1988 and 1996.

Political contributions by arms manufacturers reinforce this cozy relationship. During last year's election campaign, the top 25 weapons exporters contributed $10.8 million, according to a study by the World Policy Institute. This marks a 56 percent increase in political action committee (PAC) and soft money contributions over the previous peak of $6.9 million during the 1991-92 election cycle. The "leader of the PACs"—contributing more than $2.3 million to last year's campaign—was Lockheed Martin, the world's largest arms manufacturer.

Unlike in any other industry, U.S. taxpayers fully underwrite the research and development costs for weapons systems. In 1995, the arms industry successfully lobbied for the abolition of "recoupment fees," a small government tax on foreign weapons sales that brought in about $500 million each year to help offset R&D costs. Arguing that recoupment fees made U.S. weapons uncompetitive, the industry convinced Congress to allow the president to waive them.

U.S. dominance of the global arms market has been accomplished as much through subsidies as sales: In 1995, more than half of the $15 billion in U.S. arms exports was paid with government grants, subsidized loans, tax breaks and promotional activities. The result is a net transfer of dollars from the U.S. Treasury to weapons manufacturers. Arms export subsidies are the second largest category of corporate welfare, surpassed only by agricultural subsidies.

Currently, 6,500 full-time government employees in the Defense, Commerce and State departments are engaged in promoting and financing weapons exports through a maze of programs. The Pentagon's Foreign Military Financing program provided $3.2 billion in grants in 1995 to foreign countries—chiefly Israel and Egypt—to buy American military equipment. U.S.AID Economic Support Fund grants totalling $2.1 billion in 1995 went to help offset the costs of arms purchases. The Commerce Department subsidized outstanding military-related loans given by the Export-Import Bank to the tune of $2.1 billion in 1995. The Defense Department writes off another $1 billion each year for bad or forgiven weapons-purchase loans to foreign countries. Thirty-four countries, including Zaire, Turkey, Liberia and Sudan, owe the United States $14 billion in military loans, according to a 1996 Pentagon report; most of these loans will likely be written off.

In 1995, Lockheed Martin and other defense industry giants won congressional approval for the newest and potentially largest subsidy package. The $15 billion Defense Export Loan Guarantee Fund covers military contractor losses when foreign customers cannot afford to honor weapons sales agreements. East European NATO aspirants are now tapping this fund. In May, Romania became the first country to use the fund to underwrite the purchase of $23 million in unmanned reconnaissance planes.

The Defense Department also gives away, leases, sells at a deep discount or lends surplus weapons stocks. "While other, more visible forms of military aid have been cut since the end of the Cold War, shipments of surplus arms through a variety of programs have increased dramatically," says Lora Lumpe, director of the Federation of American Scientists' Arms Sales Monitoring Project. These giveaways—which include tanks, attack helicopters, bombers and pistols—have been used to fan regional arms rivalries (between Greece and Turkey, for instance) and to commit human rights violations in countries such as Bahrain, Colombia and Morocco.

"Recycled Weapons," a 1996 study co-authored by Lumpe, found that the U.S. military is giving away still useful equipment in order to justify the procurement of new weapons. The Air Force "Boneyard," a four square-mile

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

stretch of Arizona desert outside Tucson, provides rust-free storage for 5,200 planes, 75 percent of which are still in operating condition. "We could have air superiority with what we have in the Boneyard," Rossiter of Demilitarization for Democracy told the *New York Times*.

Rather than trekking out to the Boneyard, potential buyers more often show up at overseas air shows and expos, which are also financed by taxpayers at an annual cost of about $125 million. Once offering stripped-down export models, U.S. arms dealers at today's arms marts display top-of-the-line diesel submarines, portable surface-to-air missiles, jet fighters, missile systems and other high-tech weaponry. If the price is right, any type of weapon (except for nuclear, biological, chemical or long-range missiles) is available.

In this era of balanced budgets and belt tightening at home, the multibillion dollar bevy of subsidies for arms exporters needs to be weighed against cuts in other government programs. The 1996 welfare reform law will cut federal support for poor families by about $7 billion annually over the next five years, an amount almost equal to the yearly subsidies given to U.S. weapons manufacturers. There are parallels as well between some of the specific welfare and warfare programs. The welfare law cuts child nutrition programs by $500 million and food stamps by $2.1 billion a year. On the other side of the ledger, arms export subsidies include recoupment fee waivers of $500 million and $2.1 billion in U.S.AID Economic Support Fund grants each year.

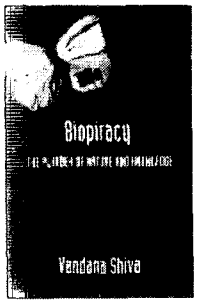
It is, in essence, the poor at home and abroad who pay the price for escalating arms exports. In a joint statement issued recently in New York, eight Nobel Peace Prize recipients—including Oscar Arias, Elie Wiesel, José Ramos Horta of East Timor and the Dalai Lama—who support an international Arms Transfer Code of Conduct declared, "Millions of civilians have been killed in conflict this century, and many more have lost their loved ones, their homes, their spirit. In a world where 1.3 billion people earn less than $1 a day, the sale of weapons simply perpetuates poverty. Our children urgently need schools and health care centers, not machine guns and fighter planes. Our children also need to be protected from violence. The dictators of this world, not the poor, clamor for arms."

But flanked against such eloquent, straightforward logic is the mighty U.S. arms industry and its government allies. "The brakes are off the system," says Lawrence Kolb, a Brookings Institute fellow and former assistant secretary of defense under Ronald Reagan. "It has become a money game: an absurd spiral in which we export arms only to have to develop more sophisticated ones to counter those spread out all over the world. ... It is very hard for us to tell other people—the Russians, the Chinese, the French—not to sell arms, when we are out there peddling and fighting to control the market." ◁

Martha Honey is director of the Institute for Policy Studies' Peace and Security Program.

REJUVENATE THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT!

BIOPIRACY
The Plunder of Nature and Knowledge
By Vandana Shiva



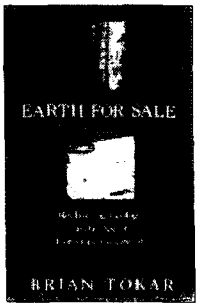
"A pathbreaking work on one of the most important issues of the coming century."
—Jeremy Rifkin, author of *The End of Work*

0-89608-555-4, $13

EARTH FOR SALE
Reclaiming Ecology in the Age of Corporate Greenwash
By Brian Tokar

"This is a must-read for anyone who wants the universe and its occupants to survive."
—Dave Dellinger

0-89608-557-0, $18



Available at independent bookstores.
Or call 1-800-533-8478 to order.

SOUTH END PRESS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CORPORATE AMERICA

Low-wage innovations

The Employer Group wants to reinvent the social contract without unions or higher pay.

By Chris Seymour

Pop Quiz. Imagine you're a personnel manager in charge of tens of thousands of low-wage chicken boners, burger flippers or hotel housekeepers.

With unemployment down, you're losing workers to slightly better-paying companies, and the replacements you attract aren't always reliable—their cars or their childcare arrangements are always breaking down. Absences, lateness and turnover cost your firm tens of millions of dollars a year. You can't seek cheaper labor overseas because the rooms you need cleaned or the chickens you need boned are here in the United States.

What do you do?

If you said, "Raise pay," hand back your stock options. But if you proposed comparing notes with other low-wage employers on low-cost programs to make workers more reliable, keep your perks. You're thinking like the execs at 26 major companies who have formed a consortium, dubbed the Employer Group, to do just that. Give yourself a six-figure bonus if you thought of getting major foundations to subsidize your efforts.

Most Employer Group members are shy about admitting that they're in an organization defined by the low wages they pay, around $8.50 an hour or less. But 10 big names have gone public, including McDonald's, hotel giant Marriott and meat and poultry mega-firm ConAgra. The New York City-based nonprofit Families and Work Institute, which researches ways to help workers balance the demands of jobs and families, snagged the Employer Group $300,000 in start-up funding from the Carnegie Corporation of New York in 1995 and another $395,000 from the Pew Charitable Trusts last year.

Marriott brings the most ambitious set of programs to the Employer Group's effort to identify, in the words of the group's mission statement, " 'best practices' that can have the most positive impact on recruitment, productivity and retention of low-wage and entry-level workers." The hotel chain's 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week employee resource line is the centerpiece of these efforts.

Workers who can't find affordable day care, have immigration hassles or face eviction can call the hotline, where a social worker will hook them up with local agencies that can help. Donna Klein, Marriott's director of Work-Life Programs, says that about 8 percent of the chain's approximately 100,000 hotel employees called the line last year. She reports that 41 percent of callers needed help finding childcare, and another 10 percent were seeking elder-care assistance. Her user surveys show that 98 percent of callers were satisfied. Klein expects hotline use to increase as Marriott heeds President Clinton's call to hire former welfare recipients, a group even closer to the economic edge than the rest of the work force. The company will spend nearly $2 million on the hotline this year but anticipates saving four times that much by preventing turnover, absences and lateness.

Marriott also found a cheap way to put more money in its workers' paychecks by helping them do the paperwork for installment payments on the Earned Income Tax Credit, which they would normally collect at the end of the year. For Rita Whittaker, a security guard at Marriott's Bethesda, Md., headquarters, that means an advance of $10 a week. "Some people can't live on a minimum income," she says. "They need help along the way."

This year Marriott joined forces with Hilton and Hyatt to form a nonprofit to operate a day-care and family-services center for hotel employees in Atlanta. The center is funded by a combination of corporate donations, state and county

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

contributions and sliding-scale enrollment fees. The center plans to offer care to 250 children along with immunizations, physical exams and English classes for parents.

ConAgra started providing childcare about six years ago. According to ConAgra executive Charles Romeo, mothers who wanted to work at a poultry processing plant in rural Huntsville, Ark., had no place to send their young children. The company donated money to build a childcare center and commissioned a local nonprofit agency to run it. "There are 150 slots," says Romeo, director of employee benefits for ConAgra's refrigerated foods division. "Seventy-five of them are earmarked for kids of our employees, and we pay for them even if they're not filled, which ensures their cash flow." A share of the enrollment fee is taken from employee paychecks, and the company nets a tax deduction. Like Marriott's resource line, ConAgra figures the investment is worth it. "The turnover of women with kids in the center is half that of other workers," Romeo says.

Despite these work-life perks, Romeo still complains that he has trouble recruiting local residents to fill his company's cold, wet, bloody and low-paid positions. So ConAgra has turned abroad, recruiting workers from East Asia and Mexico. These workers, typically men without their families, are sending chunks of their pay back home and can't afford decent housing. "They're living in appalling conditions," says Romeo. "When we ask them what they need, they tell us affordable housing is a critical issue."

In response, ConAgra sold a piece of land near the Huntsville plant to a developer who is building four-to-a-room dormitories for the plant's work force. The dorms won't be run by ConAgra, says Romeo. Employees will pay through a paycheck deduction, and the developer will get a check straight from the company. "Remember the old company housing from 100 years back?" Romeo asks.

While these sorts of programs help some workers, they sidestep the fact that many low-wage workers' problems are caused by low wages. "In the end, the balancing of work and family has an economic component," Klein says. "It's difficult to meet the challenges of work and family if you're making less than $25,000."

Lewie Anderson, who headed the packing house division of the United Food and Commercial Workers union in the '80s, dismisses the Employer Group's efforts as a public relations gimmick. "What they're doing sounds very progressive and forward-looking," he says. "But in terms of cost, it's pennies, while these jobs are bordering on poverty wages."

At $8 an hour, which is higher than the median wage at Marriott and the starting wage at ConAgra, a single parent, working full time, with two children qualifies for food stamps. Moreover, real hourly wages for workers in the bottom half of the country's pay scale fell in the first five years of recovery following the 1990-1991 recession, according to the Economic Policy Institute. Inflation-adjusted wages have started to rebound only in the last year or two.



©1997 KIT BOYCE

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MIDDLE EAST REPORT

Critical, independent analyses of events and trends shaping the Middle East today.

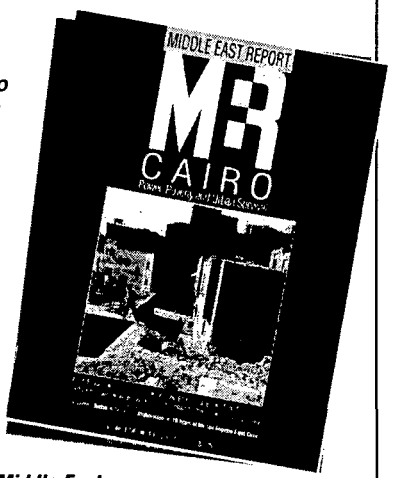
RECENT ISSUES INCLUDE:

Cairo: Power, Poverty and Urban Survival

Israel & Palestine: Two States, Bantustans or Binationalism?

Minorities in the Middle East: Power and the Politics of Difference

Syria & Lebanon: The Geopolitics of Change



Get the story from the magazine that takes on all the players—no exceptions. ***Middle East Report***, a quarterly, 48-page, award-winning magazine, can afford to be critical because it is independent. We have no ties to any government, corporation or special interest.

Our readers are our lifeline.

❑ 1 year—US $32/Canada US $37/overseas airmail US $50/institutional rate US $58 + $15 for overseas institutions

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY/STATE/POSTAL CODE/COUNTRY

❑ My check/money order payable to MERIP is enclosed.
❑ Please bill my ❑ VISA ❑ Mastercard (sorry, no American Express).

CREDIT CARD# EXP. DATE

SIGNATURE

Mail payment to **MERIP**, 1500 Mass Ave, NW, Suite 119 Washington, DC 20005
T 202-223-3677 **F** 202-223-3604
E meripcirc@igc.org **W** www.merip.org

ITT

The squeeze on wages has translated into a profits boom. The share of the country's gross domestic product that goes to the owners of capital has been increasing in the '90s, while the share going to workers has been decreasing, according to the Economic Policy Institute. Marriott's profits jumped 23.9 percent last year to $306 million, tops in the lodging industry. The company also gave CEO J.W. Marriott a 10 percent raise, bringing his salary and bonus to nearly $1.7 million. Yet Employer Group executives insist they can't afford to pay workers more. "It's a low-wage industry," says Romeo. "If we raised wages a dollar an hour, we couldn't sell our product."

Paying low wages is hardly a natural phenomenon, however. Several Employer Group companies, including Marriott, have fought union organizing, even though unions may be the only way workers can win higher wages and ensure more family-friendly benefits than the work-life programs offer. In the hotel industry, for example, pay is higher in cities where the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees union is strong. According to the Tourism Industry Development Council, a housekeeper starts at $11.59 an hour in a union hotel in San Francisco, where the union has organized 83 percent of the industry, but at only $7.85 an hour in Los Angeles, where 50 percent of the industry is unionized.

Dave Glaser, who has been leading a union campaign at the Marriott in San Francisco, points out that Marriott's hotline provides only information about childcare. The city's unionized hotels contribute cash: 15 cents an employee-hour to a new childcare fund. Starting later this year, the fund will reimburse employees $100 to $200 a month for childcare.

In meat packing, ConAgra and two other big firms, IBP and Cargill, turned high-paying jobs into low-wage ones. During the late '70s and early '80s, "they came in as low-wage operators; they ran competitors out of business, screwed farmers and drove wages down to the lowest point," says Anderson, the former union official. For example, when ConAgra bought 13 Armour plants in 1983, they lowered 3,000 workers' pay from $10.69 an hour to about $6.

That drop was not an isolated incident. In real terms, meat-packing wages have dropped 31.4 percent since 1982. In 1982, the $9 average meat-packing plant wage was 51 cents above the average wage for all manufacturing workers. Now, the average industry wage of $9.82 is almost $3 below the average manufacturing wage.

Faith Wohl of the General Services Adminstration, an Employer Group participant, says the group's efforts hark back to the social contract of mutual commitment between employer and employee that evolved after World War II. However, that pact was the product of an era when unions were strong and management was willing to tolerate them. The contract that the Employer Group envisions is one between companies that call all the shots and workers grateful for the crumbs tossed their way. ◀

Chris Seymour is a low-wage journalist and folk singer who lives in Brooklyn.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BLACK AMERICA

Whither the black media?

African-American journalists have lost sight of their history of advocacy

By Salim Muwakkil

Black journalism was born in the spirit of protest, but you wouldn't have known that strolling through the National Association of Black Journalists' (NABJ) annual convention. Sure, there were workshops devoted to such thorny issues as black identity and journalistic objectivity, but that was convention esoterica. Most of the action was at the jobs fair, where dozens of media representatives furiously recruited top prospects. In some ways, the convention was nothing more than a careerist orgy.

President Bill Clinton's appearance at the convention in Chicago in July provided unequivocal proof that the NABJ has arrived. The confab's bourgeois polish reflected the NABJ's increasingly middle-class demographics and signaled a transformation of black journalism unthinkable 22 years ago when the organization was founded. The poised, well-scrubbed NABJ members work for media organizations that wouldn't have given them the time of day before the moral and legislative victories of the civil rights movement. That black journalists would one day cavort with presidents is a prospect their forbears could hardly have imagined.

Journalism, as practiced by blacks, was once renowned for its integrity and substance. Black journalists, for the most part, have historically rejected the mainstream press' pretense of objectivity and worked openly for racial justice. That protest tradition has been African-American journalism's distinguishing feature. The profession attracted many of black America's most notable leaders, including Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, William Monroe Trotter, W.E.B. Du Bois, A. Philip Randolph, Marcus Garvey and Roy Wilkins. Ever since Samuel Cornish and John Russwurm founded the abolitionist *Freedom's Journal* in New York during the 1820s, the black-owned media played the role of unapologetic advocates for racial equality.

As late as the mid-1950s, the mainstream press continued to disregard life in the black community. But then came the civil rights movement—a story the white press could hardly ignore, though it tried mightily. During the terrifying outbreak of urban violence in the mid-'60s, President Lyndon Johnson impaneled the National Commission on Civil Disorders, popularly known as the Kerner Commission, to investigate.

The Kerner Commission's report, released in 1968, warned that the United States was "moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal." It blamed the urban unrest on persistent racial discrimination and a historical legacy of disadvantages, but it also singled out the nation's news media for censure. The media treated African-Americans as invisible, the commission concluded, and failed to communicate to their primarily white audience "a feeling for the difficulties and frustrations of being a Negro in the United States." The report chastised the media for being "shockingly backward" in not seeking out, hiring, training and promoting blacks. At the time, blacks made up less than 0.5 percent of all journalists.

Apparently, the "long, hot summers" and the Kerner Report made their point. In the late '60s, mainstream publications and broadcast outlets began hiring black journalists in unprecedented numbers. In 1978, the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) launched a campaign to lure

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

more minorities into the media and pledged to reach racial parity in the nation's newsrooms by the year 2000. Meanwhile, black journalists made their own moves to strengthen their marginal presence in the nation's media. In 1975, a dozen or so black journalists came together to found the NABJ. The group set out as its mission "to expand and balance the media's coverage of the black community."

Today that phrase is the last item in the NABJ mission statement. The focus now is more on "expanding job opportunities and recruiting activities for established African-American journalists and students interested in the journalism field."

"The founders of the group saw it as an advocacy agency, but over the years it has become more career-oriented," says Edward "Buzz" Palmer, former president of the Chicago-based Black Press Institute. "All that black journalists had as a defining ideology was the color issue. Du Bois said that the color line would be the problem of the 20th century. The distribution of wealth will be the problem of the 21st century. Black journalists have no ideological guidance, so they don't even think about the role of black journalism as anything special. It's all just a well-paying job to many of them."

For some black journalists, the job pays very well and occasionally confers the honors and privileges of media stardom, though they are rarely invited to discuss issues other than race. High-profile columnists, such as Clarence Page of the *Chicago Tribune*, Juan Williams and William Raspberry of the *Washington Post* and Carl Rowan of the *Chicago Sun-Times*, command fat honoraria and garner considerable media exposure. Television news anchors, such as PBS' Charlayne Hunter-Gault and CNN's Bernard Shaw, have become nightly fixtures. But the gains made in recent years are beginning to slow, especially in the print media, as the industry adjusts to changing economic realities. The 1997 ASNE study found that African-Americans, who comprise almost 13 percent of the population, account for just 5.4 percent of the newsroom work force. Black representation decreased slightly from the 1996 survey, the first time that black employment did not show a yearly increase since ASNE began compiling statistics 19 years ago.

This stall has not just been in hiring new personnel; suddenly, veteran columnists are being let go as publications consolidate and downsize. There are also ideological pressures on the increasingly corporate media to soften the voices of dissent. In July 1996, *USA Today* removed columnist Barbara Reynolds from her post. Karen Jurgensen, editorial page editor for *USA Today*, told the *NABJ Journal* that Reynolds' dismissal was a private matter and that it was part of a revamping of the newspaper's op-ed pages. The firing had "nothing to do with our commitment to diversity," she said.

Reynolds, however, characterized her firing as "ethnic cleansing." In a statement condemning the Reynolds affair, along with the firing of Lisa G. Baird by the *Bergen (N.J.) County Record*, Earl Caldwell of the *New York Daily News* and Wayne Dawkins of the Camden-Cherry Hill (N.J.) *Courier-Post*, the NABJ argued that "African-American opinion writers can't help but interpret this move as meaning that unless one toes the line in these conservative political times, we too are subject to being fired or harassed."

Black columnists who have attempted to provide an authentic black voice in publications with predominantly white readerships are increasingly being replaced by black columnists, such as Armstrong Williams, Walter Williams and Thomas Sowell, who openly pander to whites' distorted assumptions and biases.

As the opening of the mainstream media brought some black journalists to unprecedented prominence, it eviscerated the black alternative press. There are about 210 black newspapers in the United States, most of them weeklies—down from 255 in 1968. Many of these operate with marginal budgets and skeletal staffs, often relying on wire services to provide their news content. Salaries are notoriously low. In the days when African-American reporters had no alternative to the black press, it was possible to attract and maintain talented staffers even under such conditions. Today it's rare to do so.

As mainstream dailies hired more African-American writers and editors, they also began to target African-American readers. As a result, the black press lost much of its circulation and its influence. For example, the *Chicago Defender*, one of the great black big-city dailies, had a circulation of about 230,000 in 1915, 10 years after it was founded. By 1935, circulation dropped to 73,000, where it remained until the advent of the civil rights movement. In 1966, circulation was down to 36,541; it now hovers near 20,000.

The only national black newspaper of note is the Nation of Islam's house organ, *The Final Call*, which has avoided many of the problems that plague the black press by distributing its own product. *The Final Call* often prints news stories and columns unavailable in black publications dependent on white advertisers and distribution companies.

Nonetheless, a small reverse migration has begun, as black journalists and readers alike grow frustrated with mainstream fare. "They see these attacks from the right, the growing corporate ownership and the manic urge to downsize, and they're beginning to sense their own impotence," Palmer says.

This fall, a black-oriented national weekly aimed at an upscale African-American market, *Our World News*, will hit the stands. The Baltimore-based publication, supported heavily by Dow Jones, is already on the World Wide Web and has hired several marquee names in black journalism, including Joel Dreyfuss, formerly of *Fortune* magazine, Paul Delaney, a former *New York Times* editor and chairman of the journalism department at the University of Alabama, and Thulani Davis, a former editor at the *Village Voice*.

Because of its source of support, however, it's unlikely that *Our World News* will provide much information challenging the march of the markets or the consumerist status quo. ◀

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOYCOTT!!!

ZANTAC & ZOVIRAX
(ACYCLOVIR)

GlaxoWellcome withholds new AIDS drug. People with AIDS need treatment options. Hit GlaxoWellcome in their pocketbook!

In the last year a coalition of AIDS activists have come together to demand access to the promising antiviral Abacavir (1592). Following months of negotiations with the producer of 1592, GlaxoWellcome would allow only 2,500 slots for a compassionate use program worldwide. 1592 is an extremely important drug for people who have failed all other antiviral therapies and have no other options. Early studies of 1592 have indicated strong antiviral suppression and appropriate safety. Glaxo has been stalling development of 1592 for NINE years! Glaxo is making a mockery of hard-won compassionate use/expanded access AIDS drug programs.

GlaxoWellcome is the largest pharmaceutical manufacturer in the world, with 1996 pretax profits of $4.77 billion. Surely non-union Glaxo has enough money to produce 1592 for all who need it!

Here's what YOU can do:

- Ask for generic prescription Zantac and Acyclovir
- Don't buy over-the-counter Zantac! Try Tagamet, Pepcid, or Axid
- Call or fax the office of Glaxo CEO Robert Ingram
 phone: 919-248-2100 fax: 919-549-7459
- Get your organization to endorse and publicize this boycott
- Make 10 copies of this page for friends and relatives
- Make a donation to help pay for this ad & continue the fight for 1592

Endorsed by (partial list):
California Nurses Association
New York PWA Health Group
San Francisco Board of Supervisors
ACT UP/ New York, Los Angeles, Nevada, East Bay, Golden Gate

Yes! Enclosed is my donation of $ _____ to ACT UP/ East Bay to help the fight for 1592!

name _____

address _____

city,state,zip _____ **phone** _____

ACT UP/ East Bay ◦ PO Box 8074 ◦ Oakland, CA 94608 ◦ 510-568-1680

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

POLITICS

Food fight

Agribusiness is trying to use dubious new libel laws to control the national debate on food safety.

By Evan Halper

In April 1996, as Britain was swept up in a national panic over mad cow disease—a sickness diagnosed in U.K. cattle that has been linked to a handful of cases of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in humans—Oprah Winfrey devoted an episode of her widely popular show to the threat that the disease posed to cows and people on this side of the Atlantic.

Winfrey is hardly known for her nuanced, dispassionate examination of the issues of the day, and this episode was no exception. Howard Lyman of the Humane Society's Eating With A Conscience campaign, one of Winfrey's guests, argued that the U.S. beef industry's practice of feeding cows the ground-up remains of other cows could lead to an outbreak of mad cow disease in the United States. In fact, Lyman warned the show's millions of viewers, the United States was heading toward a tragic epidemic.

"You said this disease could make AIDS look like the common cold?" Winfrey gasped.

"Absolutely," said Lyman.

Gary Weber of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association and William Hueston of the Department of Agriculture argued that feeding rendered cows to other cattle was perfectly safe, but Winfrey emphatically sided with Lyman. "It has just stopped me cold from eating another hamburger," she said to audience applause. "I'm stopped!"

Cattle prices plummeted the next day, and dropped 10 percent by the end of May. Just days after the show aired, Texas Agricultural Commissioner Rick Perry called for action under a year-old state law banning disparaging remarks against perishable food. One of 13 states that have enacted so-called "veggie-libel" laws, Texas allows growers and ranchers to sue critics for damages suffered as a result of claims about agricultural products not grounded in "reasonable and reliable scientific inquiry, facts or data."

Texas' attorney general chose not to pursue the matter, but a group of ranchers, led by Amarillo cattleman Paul Engler, filed suit privately in June 1996. The ranchers charged that the show's "carefully and maliciously edited statements were designed to hype ratings at the expense of the American cattle industry."

The case marks the first and only suit to be filed to date under a food-disparagement law. Proponents of these laws argue that the public needs to be protected from mavericks who make outrageous claims about the dangers of modern food technologies. "Part of the incentive is to, at least, get someone to think twice before making an accusation," says Steve Kopperud, vice president of the American Feed Industry Association (AFIA). "The producer community and others have grown increasingly concerned by food scares that hit the media through activists with the price of an ad in a major publication."

Critics, however, assert that food-disparagement laws tip the scales too far in favor of the food industry and do significant harm to free speech rights. They are also concerned that the laws will make it harder for those outside the scientific establishment to question products and practices that they consider unsafe.

The nation's first food-disparagement law, passed in Colorado in 1991, was pushed through by a state legislator who claims he lost his farm due to the scare over Alar, a chemical used by apple growers to lengthen ripening time. In 1989, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) reported that Alar breaks down into a carcinogen dangerous to children. *60 Minutes* aired an Alar exposé, and public service announcements featuring Meryl Streep warned that the chemical was present in juice bottled for children. The public panicked, causing the apple industry to lose more

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

than $100 million in sales, according to industry estimates.

A group of Washington state apple growers sued CBS and the NRDC for libel in 1990, insisting that Alar was safe. The growers lost their case in court, but the food industry regained the legal upper hand when Colorado passed its food-disparagement statute.

Although the AFIA did not have a role in creating the Colorado law, it was quick to pick up the idea and run with it. On the association's behalf, Washington, D.C., law firm Olsson, Frank and Weeda has been circulating a model food-disparagement bill to state legislatures around the country since 1991. Individual corporations have also been lobbying hard for these laws. In one example, Bill Hargraves of the irradiation company Food Technology Service Inc. sent a copy of Florida's food-disparagement law to Hawaii Department of Agriculture official Lyle Wong in August 1995. At the time, Hawaii was considering a controversial plan to kill bacteria by irradiating fruits and vegetables. "You may want to encourage the Hawaiian legislature to enact something similar since it might help muzzle the anti's," Hargraves wrote.



©1997 TERRY LABAN

Seattle lawyer Bruce Johnson, who defended CBS in the Alar case, says the food-disparagement laws are unconstitutional because they violate existing standards that demand that a person must act with reckless disregard for the truth for speech regarding matters of public concern to be considered libelous. But in 1995, a Georgia court dismissed an American Civil Liberties Union legal challenge to the state's food-disparagement law because no relevant case was in litigation. Until the courts weigh in on the law's constitutionality, says David Bederman, an Emory University law professor who represented the ACLU in that case, local activists will remain anxious about what they can print in their own newsletters.

"Laws like this chill speech," he says. "People change their behavior out of fear that what they say will make them liable." He warns that the laws don't only silence fringe ideas; they ban any claims that are not based on reasonable and reliable scientific inquiry, facts or data. "This punishes scientists and investigators at the leading edge," he says. "The first person to publish in a peer review journal a new discovery, a new link, a new theory, is going to be at risk of getting sued."

Science evolves as new ideas are debated, tested and then are either refuted or become the new conventional wisdom. Lyman's comments on *Oprah* turned out not to be so far-fetched. "Everything that Howard Lyman said or what Oprah said on the show is completely defensible and inbounds," says John Stauber of the Madison-based Center for Media and Democracy and author of a forthcoming book on mad cow disease. After its initially nonchalant response, the Food and Drug Administration drafted a rule in January that, if adopted, would ban fortifying animal feed with cow renderings. Likewise in the Alar case, the Environmental Protection Agency classified the chemical as a probable human carcinogen this year.

Law or no law, the food industry continues to throw its weight around. Olsson, Frank and Weeda, the firm that circulated the model libel bill, sent a "cease and desist" warning to Food & Water, a grassroots group based in Vermont. The letter, sent on behalf of the United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association, threatened to sue the group for libel if it did not halt its campaign calling on food distributors not to carry irradiated produce.

Food & Water executive director Michael Colby thinks the industry is bluffing. "Stop threatening us and take it to the next level," he says. "We'd love to show how ridiculous the FDA approval was for some of these things. Anyone with a lick of common sense knows that there are health and environmental concerns with exposing the food supply to nuclear radiation."

As Colby waits for industry lawyers to make their next move, the *Oprah* case wends its way toward a trial. In the interim, people like Ronnie Cummins, director of the Pure Food Campaign in Washington, D.C., are on tenterhooks. He worries that a financially crippling lawsuit—whatever the outcome—would destroy his group.

You need to look no further than Winfrey, Cummins says, to see how food-disparagement laws affect activism. "Oprah said she got more letters and phone calls from that program than any other in the history of her show," he says. But the lawsuit has taken the wind out of her sails. "She went from being very outspoken on the issue to literally saying nothing." ◁

Evan Halper wrote about anti-drug hysteria in the schools in the May 12 issue.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE RIGHT

Wolf in sheep's clothing

The far right in Western Europe has traded in its master-race rhetoric for a more palatable anti-globalism discourse.

By Martin A. Lee

When the Berlin Wall came tumbling down in November 1989, few anticipated how quickly and how virulently the far right would assert itself. The ensuing collapse of Soviet-bloc Communism, rather than removing a major cause of right-wing extremism, has catalyzed its resurgence in many parts of the world—in a form that speaks to the anxieties of the new age.

In Western Europe, radical right-wing political parties have successfully tapped into widespread post-Cold War uncertainties by scapegoating immigrants and denouncing economic globalism at a time when the European work force is reeling from high unemployment, stagnating wages and government cutbacks.

Led by neofascists posing as national populists, these up-and-coming, mass-based parties are competing on an electoral terrain where the ideological distance between the mainstream parties has shriveled. Bereft of new ideas and eager to defang their neofascist competitors, government officials in one country after another have imposed sharp restrictions on immigration and adopted other extreme right-wing policy measures.

In most cases, however, this imitative response has opened the door even wider for demagogues like Jean-Marie Le Pen, whose National Front gained 15 percent of the vote in legislative elections in France this spring, and Gianfranco Fini, leader of Italy's National Alliance, which also draws about 15 percent of the vote nationwide. The Austrian Freedom Party, the strongest far-right party in Western Europe, commands 28 percent at the polls (only a shade less than the two mainstream parties) and its *führer*, the Porsche-driving populist Jörg Haider, is poised to make a serious run for chancellor. Even though they do not formally hold the reins of power in their countries, these right-wing extremists already exert a significant influence on public policy, framing key debates and decisively shaping the post-Cold War political agenda.

The leaders of these insurgent electoral movements owe a debt to an unlikely figure: Alain de Benoist, the preeminent thinker of the French "New Right." Perhaps more than any other single individual, it was de Benoist who gave neofascist strategists the key that enabled them to escape from the ideological and political ghetto in which they had been confined since the end of World War II. He was instrumental in creating a cultural and political climate in which extreme right-wing ideas once deemed taboo can now be expressed without opprobrium.

At the outset a white racialist and ardent anti-Communist, de Benoist eventually recognized that efforts to justify the fascist dictatorships of the past were futile and ill-conceived. This realization marked "the beginning of a 'long march,' an intellectual evolution," as de Benoist put it, that went through several phases and took him far beyond his neofascist roots. By the early '80s, he had come to see U.S. economic and cultural power as a greater danger to Europe than Soviet Communism and militarism. "Better to wear the helmet of a Red Army soldier," he wrote at the time, "than to live on a diet of hamburgers in Brooklyn."

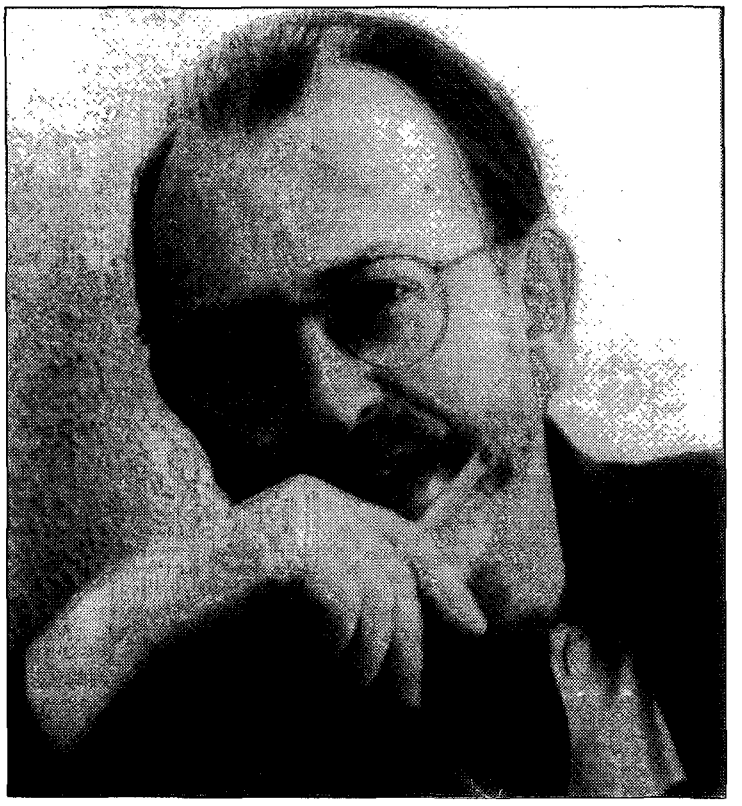
Vehemently opposed to the capitalist free market, de Benoist denounced liberalism as the ideology of an all-encompassing consumer society, which was innately totalitarian by virtue of its compulsion to reduce every aspect of existence to the realm of economic utility. He excoriated mass consumer society as a kind of "soft totalitarianism" that "air-conditions hell and kills the soul."

Soon de Benoist began to proclaim the virtues of ecology, regionalism and "the right to difference." This celebration of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"ethnopluralism" and cultural diversity signaled yet another turn in his intellectual evolution. The former white supremacist had become an ardent defender of threatened or minority cultures, of "different ways of life" that were "disappearing in a world where money is the only sign of distinction." Imagining a "Europe of a hundred flags" in the future, he rallied to the cause of cultures without countries and nations without states—the Basques, Catalans, Bretons, Lombards, Welsh, Scottish, Flemish and the like. He also praised French Jews and Vietnamese émigrés for maintaining their unique traditions and strong community bonds.

For de Benoist, the emphasis on preserving specific cultural and ethnic identities was a way of challenging the corrosive "single model" propagated by economic forces that sought to transform the world into one big global market. "Will the earth be reduced to something homogeneous because of the deculturalizing and depersonalizing trends for which American imperialism is now the most arrogant vector?" he asked in a 1993 essay in the academic journal *Telos*. "Or will people find the means for the necessary resistance in their beliefs, traditions and ways of seeing the world? This is really the decisive question that has been raised at the beginning of the next millennium."



Alain de Benoist, intellectual godfather of the European "New Right."

Although it may not have been de Benoist's intention, his intellectual peregrinations gave Le Pen and like-minded neofascists-cum-"national populists" a novel and highly effective way of camouflaging their hateful prejudices, which would have been considered beyond the pale had they mouthed master-race rhetoric. By appropriating and vulgarizing elements of de Benoist's ethnopluralist vocabulary, far-right firebrands throughout Western Europe feigned concern for the best interests of those who bore the brunt of their racist tirades. "I love North Africans, but their place is in North Africa," declared Le Pen, who insisted that French natives "not only have the right but the duty to defend our national character as well as our right to difference."

Invoked in such a manner, "the right to difference" seemed to vindicate race-mixing phobias and demands for exclusion. It also underscored the complexity of contemporary racism, which, paradoxically, can be expressed both in terms of denying or affirming the identity of another group or person. Within contemporary neofascist circles in Western Europe, a more euphemistic form of bigotry has developed that praises diversity while focusing on cultural rather than racial differences. This proved to be far more serviceable, and therefore more pernicious, than tarnished biological ideologies that touted white supremacy.

While neo-Nazi nostalgics fixated pathetically on the swastika, other far-right ideologues realized that the fascist game could be played in various ways. The more astute tacticians—such as Italy's Fini and Austria's Haider—opted not to advertise their allegiance to the fascist creed. Taking many of their cues from de Benoist, they underwent an ideological face-lift and modified their pronouncements to enhance their popular appeal. Campaigning first and foremost as protectors of Western Europe's cultural identity and economic prosperity, these erstwhile inhabitants of the fascist lunatic fringe have been able to elbow their way into the mainstream.

Ironically, one person who did not fall for their theatrics was de Benoist himself. In no uncertain terms, he denounced the anti-foreigner demagoguery of the National Front and like-minded political parties. "To say that the core of the problems which our society today confronts is caused by the presence of immigrants on our national soil is simply grotesque," he recently asserted. If Europeans could not cope with immigration, de Benoist argued, it was because they were already seriously confused about their own identity.

Acknowledging that some of his ideas have been misused for xenophobic purposes, de Benoist urges solidarity with refugees and asylum seekers. Having fled their native lands, these people are most in danger of losing their identity and traditions, he notes. Moreover, he says, mass immigration has resulted from capitalist expansion into Eastern Europe and rapid structural changes in Third World economies. "Those who remain silent about capitalism," he concludes, "should not complain about immigration." On this point, however, his cogent criticism has largely fallen on deaf ears. ◁

Martin A. Lee's book on neofascism, *The Beast Reawakens*, was recently published by Little, Brown.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LABOR

Whose side are you on?

A contract dispute in California underscores the dangers of labor-management agreements.

By David Bacon
SAN FRANCISCO

Kaiser Permanente, the country's largest health maintenance organization, has been clashing with nurses in Northern California since their union contract expired in January. After two short strikes, the company is still demanding 13 separate concessions, including high co-payments for family health coverage, two-tier salaries and a six-year wage freeze for thousands of its 7,500 registered nurses who belong to the California Nurses Association. At the same time, Kaiser refuses to negotiate over staffing and patient-care issues. CNA's job actions have been supported overwhelmingly by the company's other union workers.

Kaiser isn't fighting with all its unions, however.

On April 17, while nurses walked picket lines in a one-day strike, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney and David Lawrence, CEO of Kaiser Permanente, announced an historic agreement for labor-management cooperation in Los Angeles. The National Union-Management Partnership Agreement sets up a non-binding discussion process for job security issues, ensures management neutrality during organizing drives and encourages unions to enroll their members in Kaiser.

The timing couldn't have been worse. CNA greeted the pact with outrage, calling it "a stab in the back." The agreement has stirred up a storm of controversy in the labor movement, focusing attention on a growing debate over strategy that is likely to surface at the AFL-CIO convention this fall, the first since Sweeney's election. Faced with cost-cutting and downsizing, are unions better off forging partnerships with large employers or becoming more militant? Can unions organize new workers and represent them through negotiations at the top? How important are alliances with consumers and the public in fighting managed health care?

The disagreement over the partnership reveals a fundamental shift in Kaiser's long relationship with union workers. In one sense, the agreement seeks to restore the relationship New Deal capitalist Henry J. Kaiser forged with unions when he welcomed them into his West Coast steel mills and shipyards during World War II. But CNA's strikes reflect the current reality, not just at Kaiser but throughout the health care industry, in which conflict between corporations and their workers and patients is escalating.

Kaiser was built by union health care dollars and is staffed overwhelmingly by union labor. The company at first maintained higher standards than other managed-care plans. Patients could see doctors longer and had easier access to specialists. But once cut-throat competitors started poaching members from its plan, Kaiser decided to adopt similar practices to compete.

The company has imposed limits on hospital stays and tied some doctors' bonuses to rationing care. Patients have died during transfers from Kaiser facilities that no longer provide full emergency services. The California State Supreme Court recently found Kaiser guilty of delaying settlements with patients whom it forced into its in-house arbitration system. Meanwhile, the organization now pays top managers salaries approaching the million-dollar mark, and it spends millions more on anti-union consultants.

At the same time, Kaiser has aggressively sought to expand its share of the health care market. As Kaiser's empire grows, it provides less and less care directly in its own hospitals, and instead contracts with other chains. In recent years, Kaiser has shut down a number of facilities, especially older ones in poor and working-class communities, while building new ones in more affluent suburbs. Kaiser is closing its original flagship hospital in Oakland, Calif., and the large Sunset facility in Los Angeles.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This sort of restructuring is par for the course with most health care providers today, as managed-care bean-counters cut costs to boost profits. Some question whether the AFL-CIO should have entered into a labor-management partnership in this context.

The agreement gives Kaiser's unions a right that few have any longer in any industry: decision bargaining. It sets up a "senior partnership committee" of high-level company officials and union officers, who will discuss plans to close or expand facilities as well as other changes that may affect workers' jobs and income. Kaiser agrees to share information about its business plans, which unions agree to keep confidential. Kaiser will recognize union representation for non-union employees based on a card check. In return, the unions agree to encourage AFL-CIO members to enroll in Kaiser's plan.

"It creates a much more union-friendly environment," explains Eliseo Medina, vice-president for the western region of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). "The health care industry is changing very rapidly. Under the agreement, if the company plans [to close facilities], we now have time to find an alternative."

The card-check recognition process, too, will be a boon to Kaiser's unions, especially SEIU, the company's largest. Kaiser has about 10,000 non-union employees who could be organized, according to Kevin Murphy of the AFL-CIO's Industrial Union Department, which crafted the agreement. In addition, Murphy notes, "the partnership calls for Kaiser to encourage other providers to adopt its union-friendly practices when work gets transferred to them."

On the other hand, Medina says, "there's nothing in the agreement that mandates anyone to do anything." If unions and Kaiser disagree, each reverts to the rights—or lack of them—that they have under their contracts and labor law. Nor does the agreement cover parts of Kaiser's business plan already in place when it was signed, including the Sunset closing in Los Angeles.

Some critics fear that the agreement will undermine union clout. Once unions encourage members to transfer their health plans to Kaiser, they lose their bargaining leverage with other providers, who can be counted on to vigorously fight any attempts to organize their own workers. While almost all of Kaiser is already organized, most other California hospital chains are not, especially in Southern California. There unions represent only 8 percent of hospital workers, almost all of whom are employed by Kaiser. Unions have a hard time demanding better wages and conditions in a non-union environment where employers pay less.

Medina says SEIU is planning a major health care organizing drive in Los Angeles, with the resources and visibility the union gave to its successful Justice for Janitors campaign. He also points out that the partnership principle isn't exclusive to Kaiser, and that other companies can get the same deal if they recognize unions. "The partnership allows us to concentrate on the main problem—organizing the rest of the industry," he says. "Until we organize the vast majority of health care workers, we'll continue to have problems."

But to organize non-union workers, Kaiser has to be an example of how unions can make things better. Yolanda Rios, a Los Angeles Kaiser worker and SEIU member, points out that to use Kaiser as a base, the union has to become more militant, fight for a better contract in Los Angeles, train the rank and file to enforce that contract, and support them when they do. "We don't think the partnership gives workers a voice," she says. "The Senior Partnership Committee takes things out of our hands. We want to fight the company more effectively and win better conditions at work. How does this agreement help?"

Rios and CNA argue that unions can't fight effectively over conditions that affect hospital workers without at the same time concerning themselves with the quality of patient care. Kaiser has eliminated 14 percent of its nursing staff in three years, a total of 1,500 jobs. When nurses are eliminated, or replaced with workers with less training or education, patient care deteriorates.

"You can't be on the side of the public and the side of the corporation at the same time," declares Rose Ann DeMoro, CNA's executive director. "The agreement places the union in the position of being a special interest, while we should be the strongest advocates for patient care. I agree with the importance of organizing, but we have to ask, organize to what end?"

The partnership doesn't prohibit unions from advocating for better patient care, but it does set up a cooperative relationship inconsistent with attacking the company. During partnership discussions, for example, unions may learn important information affecting patient care, but the agreement forbids them from making it public. "Instead of bringing these issues up in partnership discussions, we should use the power of collective bargaining," DeMoro says.

Relations between CNA and SEIU hit the skids last November when the two unions proposed competing California ballot initiatives aimed at controlling HMO abuses. Nevertheless, SEIU's huge Hospital Local 250 and other Kaiser unions in Northern California have continued to vote to respect the nurses' job actions. Despite disagreement on the partnership, they are trying to maintain a common front, since none can successfully strike the HMO without the support of the others.

In July, Kaiser went back to the table, three months after breaking talks off. But the company continued to demand concessions, which CNA refused to accept. CNA struck again for two days. In the meantime, CNA settled contracts with other Northern California hospitals with significant raises, casting doubt on Kaiser's argument that it needs concessions to remain competitive.

While holding out the partnership's olive branch to some of its unions, Kaiser still seems bent on playing hardball with others. ◁

David Bacon was a union organizer for 20 years. He is associate editor for Pacific News Service in San Francisco.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IN THE ARTS

Satisfying work

The score is Career 2, Family 0 in Mike Leigh's new film.

By Lawrence Levi

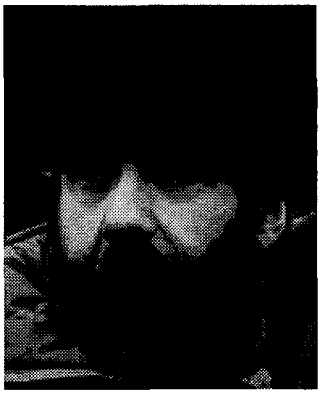
Hollywood has so much to learn from Mike Leigh. The writer/director of *Naked*, *Life is Sweet* and *Secrets & Lies* invests his characters with all the complexity and nuance that we expect from novels. He makes them ambiguous and moody. There aren't good guys or bad guys (though his rich characters are never likable). There are only people, with all their vagaries and frustrations.

Career Girls, Leigh's sixth feature, gives a glimpse into the essence of two people's lives. The film is more tightly focused than *Secrets & Lies*—it's shorter, with fewer characters and more pronounced themes. *Secrets & Lies* depended on a certain Sophoclean suspense: When is everybody going to find out that the working-class white woman and the middle-class black woman are mother and daughter? *Career Girls*, like Leigh's earlier films, is concerned more with character than suspense or conflict. Two college roommates reunite after six years, and over a weekend in London, they talk, drink, go apartment shopping and run into some old friends. But nothing more needs to happen (in the Hollywood sense) because this is a Mike Leigh movie.

Annie (Lynda Steadman, in her first film role) looks prim and pensive when we encounter her behind the opening credits, sitting alone on the train to London and musing about her college years. Before the credits end, we've met her and Hannah (Katrin Cartlidge, from *Naked*) in flashback when the two meet as they are becoming roommates in a flat. Annie has a terrible rash on her cheek and teased, asymmetrical punk-rock hair. She is intensely awkward—she can't look people in the eye and continuously flinches as if she's about to get hit. Hannah is aggressive, fast-talking and funny. With characteristic boldness, she flatly tells Annie that she seems to lack a sense of humor.

Leigh continues this crosscutting between past and present throughout the film—at least half the movie occurs in flashback. Annie and Hannah aren't aged simply with makeup or haircuts or clothes; they become genuinely more poised and grown-up. In the flashbacks, they're saddled with neurotic tics. Annie bulges her eyes out and flicks her head about uncontrollably. Hannah is manic, and has a funny gesture that she repeats, turning her thumb and forefingers into a talking hand. In a Hollywood movie, their personalities would have to be "cured" by the conclusion—Annie would become bold and outspoken, and Hannah's aggression would be punished—but here they are allowed to struggle to mature on their own.

When Annie steps off the train in London, she's surprised (as are we) to see Hannah in her new, workaday form—composed and self-possessed, with dyed blonde hair and dapper clothes. In Hannah's apartment, Annie admires the decor—appliances, paint job, tasteful furniture—and exclaims, "You've got everything." Hannah, in her self-deprecating way, replies, "Well, I wouldn't say that." Her career ascendance leads Hannah to expect more from her life. We know, however, from their working-class accents in the college scenes that they've already come a long way.



Career Girls
Directed by Mike Leigh

The once pathologically shy Annie now says she is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

content to work in human resources out in the sticks because, as she tells Hannah, "I like working with people." Hannah, no longer aggressive but just matter of fact, has become a manager at a stationery company. In his typically ironic fashion, Leigh has created a character who is a former literature major now marketing blank pages for a living.

Hannah aims to move up the class ladder, and as a lark, she and Annie inspect apartments for sale that Hannah can't afford. At the first one, a duplex in a luxury high-rise, they encounter Mr. Evans (Andy Serkis), the apartment's current owner and as vile a yuppie as one could expect to meet. Leigh has a thing about yuppies—in *High Hopes* and *Naked*, he depicts them as greedy, soulless caricatures. Mr. Evans saunters about in his bathrobe, making repeated passes at the women. When he's not offering them wine or champagne, he's taking hits off a joint. His apartment is an arsenal of misogynistic paraphernalia including an enormous mural of a naked, spread-eagled woman ("My ex-wife," he explains).



Annie (Lynda Steadman) with one of her loser college boyfriends (Mark Benton).

© OCTOBER FILMS/PHOTO: JOSS BARRATT

Mr. Evans, who has indeed split up with his wife, has a young daughter he doesn't care about. This kind of domestic breakdown characterizes all the relationships in the movie. Even though Hannah makes breakfast for her drunken mother once a week, she'll never compare to her sister. Annie lives with her mother, whom she says is "like a sister," but it's a situation that doesn't thrill her. The only people in the film who aren't either unpromisingly married or divorced are the protagonists, the "career girls."

Hannah's relationships never last more than two months because she says men drive her crazy. Annie has gotten involved with men but hasn't found anyone she'd like to marry. Proof of their bad luck: Adrian (Joe Tucker), a college boyfriend of both women, is a charismatic slimeball. At their London reunion, Annie tells Hannah with a look of despair that she's been "thinking about him for 10 years." Ricky (Mark Benton), a more sensitive classmate, had a crush on Annie in their school years, but he also had a huge belly and a bad stutter. His response to her rejection is one of the most poignant and disturbing aspects of the film.

In college, the two women used a paperback of *Wuthering Heights* as an oracle. They ask "Ms. Bronte" for predictions about their sex lives by flipping to a random page and pointing to a word. But the response is always nonsense—which is the point. In a movie about how one's past affects one's present, the future is nevertheless entirely unpredictable. In the luxury apartment, when Hannah asks the yuppie how he makes his money, he replies simply, "Futures."

Leigh also links past and present on the soundtrack. Annie listens to The Cure in college. The band's upbeat music and downbeat lyrics work dramatically and aesthetically with the fast pacing and handheld camera work of the flashbacks. Since the characters bear psychological scars that will have repercussions for the rest of their lives ("You're a walking open wound," Hannah tells Annie), the band's name resonates with a kind of literary irony. The Cure poster on the wall inside their college apartment declares, "Boys Don't Cry," an allusion to what Hannah reveals about herself to Annie — that she hasn't cried since she was nine, when her father left with another woman.

Unfortunately, the original music on the soundtrack (by Marianne Jean-Baptiste and Tony Remy) is cheesy jazz. It chimes in, in a very Hollywood way, to indicate that something significant has been said. Its melodramatic tone doesn't jibe with Leigh's understated storytelling style. In his other films, he uses chamber music, which is heavy but never distracting; instead, it seems to comment on the action, like a Greek chorus.

In Hollywood, independent women have always been put in their place. Both melodramas and comedies drive home the point that women are weaker than men or that they are dependent on men. Women are punished for their rebellions (for instance in *Thelma and Louise*). In *Career Girls*, every male character is either cruel or absent or a failure. For these so-called career girls—unmarried, and in no hurry to get hitched—careers seem to be the only thing for them to pursue beyond friendship with each other. Leigh isn't saying (as a Katharine Hepburn-Spencer Tracy movie might have said) that a woman has to choose between her career and her "natural" desire for motherhood. He's suggesting that, in modern society, a woman's impulse to have a husband and children is easily derailed by the failure of families. Being a career girl (a modern euphemism for "spinster") might be the only viable alternative. ◁

Lawrence Levi is an associate editor at *Art & Antiques*.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IN PRINT

The old man and Iran-Contra

By Robert Parry

In crucial ways, Watergate, the signature scandal of the '70s, and Iran-Contra, the signature scandal of the '80s, were opposites. Watergate showed how the press and constitutional institutions of American democracy—Congress and the courts—could check a gross abuse of power by the executive branch. A short dozen years later, the Iran-Contra scandal demonstrated how those same institutions had ceased to protect the nation from serious White House wrongdoing.

Watergate, the scandal that undid Richard Nixon's presidency, started a quarter century ago as a case of political skullduggery, in Nixon's phrase, a "third-rate burglary" at the Democratic National Committee's headquarters in the Watergate complex. But it sparked a brief national awakening, which exposed Cold War abuses—government spying on dissidents, lies about the Vietnam War and assassination plots hatched at the CIA.

Watergate and Nixon's resignation in 1974 also startled conservatives, who responded by constructing a new political infrastructure. With vast sums from right-wing foundations and anti-Communist foreign interests such as the South Korean-based Unification Church, conservatives started magazines, newspapers, television networks and aggressive political operations.

In 1986, a secret scheme surfaced to finance the Contra war in Nicaragua against the elected leftist Sandinista government by selling weapons to Iran. These crimes were arguably more serious than those of Watergate. Iran was a declared terrorist state, and the Contras had earned a reputation for slaughtering civilians, a major factor in the congressional decision in 1984 to cut off U.S. assistance. Ronald Reagan circumvented the Constitution and operated clandestine foreign policy in defiance of Congress.

The Iran-Contra cover-up marked the restoration of a Cold War status quo in which crimes, both domestic and international, could be committed by the executive branch while the Congress and the press looked the other way. It was a victory of weakness and deceit. On one front, the Washington media want to perpetuate the myth that they remain the heroic Watergate press corps of *All the President's Men*. On another, the national Democratic establishment wants to forget how it crumbled in the face of pressures from the Reagan-Bush administrations. And the Republicans want to protect the legacy of their last two presidents.

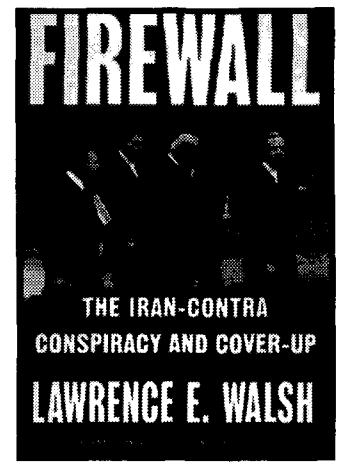
Those combined interests likely will lead to few favorable reviews of a book by a man who put himself in the way of that cover-up—Iran-Contra independent counsel Lawrence Walsh. In his remarkable book, *Firewall: The Iran-Contra Conspiracy and Cover-up*, Walsh details his six-year battle to break through the "firewall" that White House officials built around President Reagan and Vice President George Bush after the Iran-Contra scandal exploded in November 1986.

For Walsh, a lifelong Republican who shared the foreign policy views of the Reagan administration, the Iran-Contra experience was life-changing. His investigation penetrated one wall of lies only to be confronted with another and another—and not just lies from Oliver North and his cohorts but lies from nearly every senior administration official who spoke with investigators.

According to Walsh, the cover-up conspiracy took formal shape at a meeting of Reagan and his top advisers at the White House on November 24, 1986. The meeting's principal point of concern was how to handle the troublesome fact that Reagan had approved illegal arms sales to Iran in the fall of 1985. The act was a felony—a violation of the Arms Export Control Act—and possibly an impeachable offense.

Though Iran-Contra documents and testimony would eventually establish that virtually everyone in the room knew that Reagan had approved those shipments through Israel, Attorney General Edwin Meese announced what would become the cover story:

> [Meese] told the group that although [NSC adviser Robert] McFarlane had informed [Secretary of State George] Shultz of the planned shipment, McFarlane had not informed the president. ... [White House chief of staff Don] Regan, who had heard McFarlane inform the president and who had heard the president admit to Shultz that he knew of the shipment



Firewall: The Iran-Contra Conspiracy and Cover-up
By Lawrence Walsh
W.W. Norton
544 pp, $29.95

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



©1997 TERRY LABAN

of Hawk [anti-aircraft] missiles, said nothing. Shultz and [Defense Secretary Caspar] Weinberger, who had protested the shipment before it took place, said nothing. [Vice President George] Bush, who had been told of the shipment in advance by McFarlane, said nothing. [CIA Director William] Casey, who ... [had] requested that the president sign the retroactive finding to authorize the CIA-facilitated delivery, said nothing. [NSC adviser John] Poindexter, who had torn up the finding, said nothing. Meese asked whether anyone knew anything else that hadn't been revealed. No one spoke. When Shultz returned to the State Department, he dictated a note to his aide, Charles Hill, who wrote down that Reagan's men were "rearranging the record." They were trying to protect the president through a "carefully thought out strategy" that would "blame it on Bud [McFarlane]."

As part of that strategy, virtually all of Reagan's top advisers, including Shultz, gave false and misleading testimony to Congress and prosecutors. Their accounts essentially blamed the illegalities on Marine Lt. Col. Oliver North and his bosses at the National Security Council, McFarlane and Poindexter. Pretty much everyone else—at the CIA, the Defense Department, the Vice President's office and the White House—claimed ignorance.

Even though Oliver North testified in 1987 that he was the "fall guy," the Democrats and much of the press corps fell for it. Later, leading congressional Democrats, including House Speaker Jim Wright, acknowledged that they decided early in the inquiry that Reagan would not be implicated—regardless of the facts—to avert a politically wrenching impeachment battle. By the fall of 1987, the "men of zeal" cover story that placed a few underlings as initiators of the illegal arms sales had been enshrined as the official history of the Iran-Contra affair.

The story might have stopped there but for the work of Walsh and his small team of lawyers. Yet Walsh's investigation was hampered from the start by congressional rashness and criticism from the media. Congress was so ready to accept the theory of a rogue operation that it rushed ahead with televised hearings designed to make North and his NSC superiors, McFarlane and Poindexter, the primary culprits. Without even questioning North ahead of time, the Iran-Contra committee granted the charismatic Marine officer and his pipe-smoking boss, Poindexter, limited immunity.

Three years later, that immunity came back to haunt Walsh's hard-won convictions of North and Poindexter on cover-up charges. Conservative judges on the federal appeals court, particularly Reagan loyalists Laurence Silberman and David Sentelle, exploited the immunity opening to reverse North's conviction in 1990. Sentelle, a protégé of Sen. Jesse Helms (R-NC), also joined in the decision to wipe out Poindexter's conviction in 1991. (Since then, Sentelle has taken over the three-judge panel that selects independent counsels.)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Still, Walsh's investigation had broken through the White House cover-up in 1991-92. Almost by accident, as Walsh's staff double-checked some long-standing document requests, the lawyers discovered hidden notes belonging to Weinberger and other senior officials. The notes made clear that there was widespread knowledge of the 1985 illegal shipments to Iran and that a major cover-up had been orchestrated by the Reagan and Bush administrations.

The belated discovery led to indictments against senior CIA officials and Weinberger. Congressional Republicans, led by Sen. Bob Dole, reacted by angrily denouncing Walsh and calling for an end to his investigation. The Washington press corps also had grown hostile, complaining that Walsh's probe had taken too long and had cost too much. The conservative *Washington Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*'s editorial page fired near-daily barrages at Walsh, often over trivial matters, such as first-class airfare and room-service meals. Key columnists and editorial writers for the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*—along with television pundits David Brinkley and Christopher Matthews—joined in Walsh bashings. Walsh was mocked as a modern-day Captain Ahab.

In his book, however, Walsh compared his experience to another maritime classic, Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*. In that story, an aging fisherman hooks a giant marlin and, after a long battle, secures the fish to the side of his boat. On the way back to port, sharks attack the marlin, devouring its flesh and denying the fisherman his prize. "As the independent counsel, I sometimes felt like the old man," Walsh writes. "More often, I felt like the marlin."

More seriously, the congressional and media attacks effectively limited Walsh's ability to pursue what appeared to be other false statements by senior administration officials. Those perjury inquiries could have unraveled other national-security mysteries of the '80s and helped correct the historical record. But Walsh could not overcome the pack-like hostility of official Washington.

For instance, the Walsh team suspected that Bush's national security adviser, ex-CIA officer Donald Gregg, had lied when he testified that he was unaware of North's Contra resupply operation. Gregg's close friend Felix Rodriguez worked with North in Central America and called Gregg after each Contra delivery. There already had been problems with Gregg's story, including the discovery of a vice-presidential office memo describing a planned meeting with Rodriguez about "resupply of the Contras." Gregg bizarrely explained the memo away as a typo that should have read, "resupply of the copters."

Gregg failed a polygraph test when he denied knowledge of the Contra supply operation. The polygraph again indicated that Gregg was lying when he denied participating in the so-called October Surprise operation, an alleged secret CIA-GOP operation in 1980 to undermine President Carter's Iran hostage negotiations and secure Reagan's election.

Walsh felt compelled to set aside allegations about Gregg as he struggled to finish several pending perjury cases against Weinberger and CIA officials Clair George and Duane Clarridge. As those cases moved haltingly forward, anti-Walsh attacks multiplied in Congress and in the Washington media.

The Republican independent counsel also infuriated the GOP when he submitted a second indictment of Weinberger on the Friday before the 1992 elections. The indictment contained documents revealing that President Bush had been lying for years when he had claimed that he was "out of the loop" on the Iran-Contra decisions. The ensuing furor dominated the last several days of the campaign and sealed Bush's defeat at the hands of Bill Clinton.

Walsh discovered, too, that Bush withheld his own notes about the Iran-Contra affair, a discovery that elevated the president to a possible criminal subject of the investigation.

But Bush had one more weapon in his arsenal. On Christmas Eve 1992, Bush destroyed the Iran-Contra probe once and for all by pardoning Weinberger and five other convicted or indicted defendants. "George Bush's misuse of the pardon power made the cover-up complete," Walsh writes. "What set Iran-Contra apart from previous political scandals was the fact that a cover-up engineered in the White House of one president and completed by his successor prevented the rule of law from being applied to the perpetrators of criminal activity of constitutional dimension."

But the cover-up likely could not have worked if other Washington institutions—Congress, the courts and the press—had not helped. Those institutions aided and abetted the White House both directly, through decisions that undermined the cases or reversed convictions, or indirectly, through incessant heckling of Walsh's investigators over trivial complaints.

Like the cover-up, the historic reversal—from the constitutional protections of Watergate to the flouting of law in Iran-Contra—was complete. ◀

Robert Parry broke many Iran-Contra stories for The Associated Press, *Newsweek* and PBS' *Frontline*. He now edits *I.F. Magazine* and *The Consortium*, where a version of this review first appeared.

ENVIRTECH, INC.



RETAILERS/DISTRIBUTORS NEEDED FOR STATE-OF-THE-ART

Filterless Indoor Air Purification System

REDUCES dust, animal dander, mold, mildew, VOC's, bacteria, pollen, viruses, smoke and odors. Portable units for home, office & commercial. ***VISUAL demo unit.***

Low inventory-High $ Profit. Retail $495-$995. #1 MLM co.

500% Growth *in last two years*

CALL OR FAX JERRY AT:
303-469-4537 or Fax 303-469-0421

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Cracking myths about crack

By **Jeffrey L. Reynolds**

Crack first appeared in late 1984 and found a home in the minority-populated, inner-city neighborhoods of New York, Los Angeles and Miami. With its low cost and quick high, the cocaine derivative was a perfect match for those looking to escape the realities of impoverished urban life—and for those looking to escalate America's war on drugs. Madison Avenue and Pennsylvania Avenue spin doctors conjured up lurid images of predatory dealers, crazed whores and struggling, tube-filled babies. Proclaiming crack evil, they warned well-off suburbanites about its purported instantly addicting properties.

"By and large, the media and politicians' pronouncements about drugs spread exaggerations, misinformation and simplistic theories of cause and effect. They taught bad pharmacology, bad sociology, bad criminology, bad urban anthropology and even bad history," write sociologists Craig Reinarman and Harry G. Levine in the first chapter of *Crack in America: Demon Drugs and Social Justice*. The editors pull no punches in setting the record straight. They have assembled an impressive team of veteran lawyers, physicians and academics to write the definitive book on crack.

Though *Crack in America* offers a scathing indictment of current drug policy similar to last year's landmark *Drug War Politics* by Eva Bertram, Kenneth Sharpe, Morris Blachman and Peter Andreas, this book's singular focus is among its strengths. The 17 essays put the drug in historical, political, economic, legal and social context.

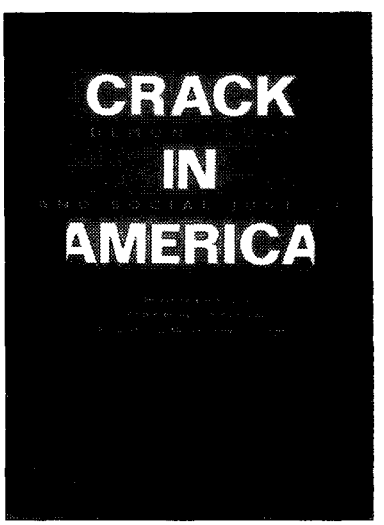
Despite the splashy headlines and tabloid TV shows that fueled '80s crack hysteria, a widespread epidemic never materialized, according to research by the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Among adults queried in a 1992 national household survey, only 3 percent had ever tried crack. Of these, one-third had used it in the previous month and another third in the previous year. An even smaller fraction, the editors argue, have become addicted, instantly or otherwise. They do concede that "crack use may have been an epidemic ... among impoverished young African Americans and Latinos. However, crack use was never spreading fast or far enough among the general population to be termed an epidemic there."

Crack in America sharply refutes the "just say no" simple-mindedness that characterizes much of the discussion about illegal drugs. "From the beginning," Reinarman and Levine write, "crack was a drug of escape from poverty and despair of inner-city men and women"—not only a psychopharmacological escape but an economic one as well. It's a well-worn assertion, but it bears repeating, especially when politicians blame unemployment, poverty and racism on drug use rather than the other way around.

Anthropologist Phillipe Bourgois echoes this point of view in his chapter, "In Search of Horatio Alger." He recounts his observations on the streets and in the crack houses of Spanish Harlem. "For many people I met, the underground economy and the culture of terror are seen as the most *realistic* routes to upward mobility," he writes. Crack dealers are, in a sense, the "ultimate 'rugged individualists,' braving an unpredictable free-market frontier where fortune, fame and destruction are all just around the corner."

Since male dealers dominate the drug marketplace, gender, like race and class, becomes part of an unbalanced equation that leaves women of color at a particular disadvantage. Researchers Sheigla Murphy and Marsha Rosenbaum spent two years interviewing 125 crack and cocaine users. Their case study of Monique, a young African-American woman who performs oral sex in a burnt-out public housing apartment in exchange for $20 rocks, speaks volumes—especially in contrast to the experiences of another typical drug user, Becky, a white, middle-class, suburban teenager who works in a nightclub coat check on Saturday evenings. Becky and her co-workers pool their tips to score a few lines of cocaine from the bartender at the end of the night. Becky eventually heads off to Hawaii with her father, abandons her habit and succeeds in college. Monique stops using crack only to wind up miserably depressed in a homeless shelter with no job prospects.

Though such stereotypical extremes will make some readers cringe, the authors maintain that these case studies accurately portray a broader social reality. They use the two examples to highlight key differences that extend beyond the crack-vs.-cocaine debate. Impor-



Crack in America: Demon Drugs and Social Justice
Edited By Craig Reinarman and Harry G. Levine
University of California Press
392 pp.
$48 (cloth), $17.95 (paper)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tant factors in determining crack's destructiveness include how the drug is obtained, where it is used and with whom, and what prospects for a future without drugs the user has.

In his chapter on race, University of California-Berkeley sociologist Troy Duster hauls out statistics on everything from unemployment to college-enrollment rates to show how race-based disparities helped fuel the rise of crack use—and incarceration for drug-related crime—among African-Americans. Drug laws have been selectively enforced to target street-level dealers, which has helped put African-Americans behind bars at a rate several times higher than that of their white counterparts.

Consider, for example, that blacks constitute only 15 to 20 percent of the nation's drug users but in most urban areas constitute between one-half and two-thirds of those arrested for drug offenses. A Clark Foundation study Duster cites found that African-Americans and Latinos constituted an astounding 92 percent of those arrested in New York City for drug offenses in 1989.

The disparity in drug sentencing is striking, too. Duster notes that possession with intent to distribute five grams of cocaine brings a sentence of 10 to 37 months while possession with intent to distribute an identical amount of crack carries a mandatory minimum sentence of five years. It's no coincidence that whites more often sell and consume powder cocaine, and blacks more often sell and use crack.

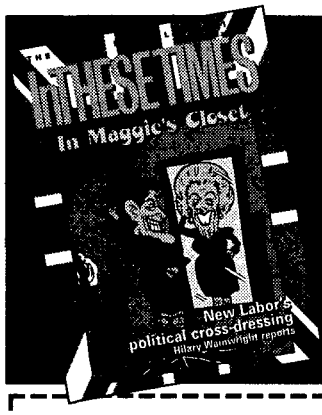
The targeted street sweeps, illegal searches, drug courier profiles, anti-loitering laws and other civil liberties casualties of the drug war all figure prominently in the crack story. Ira Glasser and Loren Siegel of the American Civil Liberties Union catalog the costs of a law enforcement approach to what the authors deem a public health problem. It is primarily black and Latino men who have paid the price of continued addiction, incarceration, poverty, HIV infection and AIDS, they write.

The misguided approach in the United States stands in sharp contrast to the way drug use is dealt with in Australia, Canada and the Netherlands, as essayists from each of those countries show. They say a greater emphasis on social welfare and public health has held crack and other hard drug use at bay in their countries. In his chapter on drug prohibition, Lindesmith Center director Ethan Nadelman outlines a series of efforts that have helped minimize the health risks to drug users in other countries. In this country, President Bill Clinton refuses to lift the ban on federal funding for syringe-exchange programs, despite their demonstrated success in reducing drug-related HIV. Thus, it is hard to imagine the United States following other countries' models of making heroin available by prescription or legalizing marijuana.

Crack in America is a thoroughly researched and expertly written book. Though some chapters make for arduous reading and seem more suited to a scientific journal or graduate-level textbook, they nonetheless buoy the editors' efforts to debunk popular myths and go beyond the rhetoric that plagues the drug war.

Books about contemporary problems typically conclude with a list of lofty policy proposals and recommendations that wind up gathering dust on a shelf somewhere. Reinarman and Levine resist the temptation, and instead encourage readers to take a second look at recommendations that were never implemented. Among them is a 1967 report of President Lyndon Johnson's Task Force on Narcotics and Drug Abuse. It optimistically predicts that "broad-scale programs such as those envisioned in welfare, antipoverty, mental health, public health and other progressive efforts can be expected to contribute to the control of, if not to a reduction in drug abuse." Success might have been possible had a long-term commitment been made to these efforts, but such social programs have all but disappeared 30 years later. ◀

Jeffrey L. Reynolds is a freelance writer based in New York.



Subscribe to ITT!

☐ NEW SUBSCRIPTION. You'll receive your first issue in 4-6 weeks. Please check price and terms below. AST1

☐ RENEW NOW. We'll extend your current subscription for as long as you like. This saves you worries about expiring and helps us save money and the environment by not sending renewal notices and bills. ART1

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY/STATE/ZIP

PRICES & TERMS

☐ One year, 26 issues of In These Times: $36.95

☐ Six months, 13 issues: $19.95 ☐ Institutional, one year: $59.00

☐ Payment enclosed ☐ Bill me Charge my ☐ Visa ☐ MC

ACCOUNT NUMBER / EXPIRATION DATE

SIGNATURE

Canadian orders, add: $27.50 (one year), $13.50 (six months) postage. All other foreign orders add: $41.00 (one year), $20.50 (six months).

Mail to: IN THESE TIMES Customer Service, 308 Hitt St., Mt. Morris, IL 61054
Or call: 1-800-827-0270

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CLASSIFIEDS

▷ HELP WANTED

DIRECTOR: Statewide grassroots progressive environmental organization seeks director with experience in organizing and foundation fundraising. Responsible for coordinating advocacy on pollution and labor/environmental justice issues, and citizen assistance. Salary based on experience. Excellent benefits. Send résumé, writing sample, 3 references to Citizens' Environmental Coalition, 33 Central Avenue, Albany, New York 12210. Fax: 518-436-9351. Union Shop/Affirmative Action Employer.

ORGANIZER/ACTIVIST with NJ Citizen Action, state's largest consumer watchdog coalition, working on multi-issue campaigns. Qualifications: experience in community, student, church, political organizing; good writing, phone & computer skills; interest in health care or lead poisoning prevention a plus. Car required. Salary high 20s, plus good benefits. Résumé: AW, NJCA, 400 Main Street, Hackensack, NJ 07601.

LABOR UNION: California's largest nurses union, representing 30,000 nurses across the state, is looking for dynamic, experienced labor staff to help with our fight to ensure access to quality care and to stem the tide of health care corporatization and privatization. Several positions available statewide. Top wages/benefits. Send résumé/cover letter to Rose Ann DeMoro, Executive Director, CNA, 1145 Market St., 1100, San Francisco, CA 94103; Fax (415) 864-3066. No phone calls, please.

CAQ (COVERT ACTION QUARTERLY) seeks editorial staff member with journalism experience, ability to meet deadlines and work independently. Development skills a plus. Understanding of U.S./world politics required. Women/people of color encouraged. Résumé by July 15 to CAQ Jobsearch, 1500 Mass. Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20005.

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO UNION PRESIDENT. International Union seeking candidates. Strong people, administrative skills. Speech writing ability necessary. Labor background a must. Excellent salary, benefits. Send résumé to: Gordon Brehm, UPIU, P.O. Box 1475, Nashville, TN 37202.

UNION ORGANIZER—Progressive health care union. Experience with organizing, negotiations, contract administration, leadership development. Salary DOE, comprehensive benefits, EOE, car required. Send résumé to 300 Queen Anne Ave. N #335, Seattle, WA 98109.

COMMUNITY JOBS: The Employment Newspaper for the Non-Profit Sector. Join over 50,000 job-seekers in reading a unique monthly publi-

Socialist

A democratic socialist view of life and politics from the Socialist Party USA. $9.00 per year (6 issues).

516 W. 25th St. #404, NY, NY 10001
(212) 691-0776

New Political Science

Radical scholarship on today's political issues.
Special price! $25 for 4 issues

Gvt. Dpt., Suffolk Univ.,
Boston, MA 02108
617-573-8126

CHIAPAS

CHALLENGING HISTORY

INDIGENOUS VIEWPOINTS ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN SOUTHERN MEXICO

SPECIAL EDITION OF *AKWE:KON JOURNAL*. SINGLE ISSUE: $14.00 PPD. ONE-YEAR SUBSCRIPTION: $18.00 (U.S.) CHECK/VISA/MC TO: 300-IT CALDWELL HALL, CORNELL UNIVERSITY, ITHACA, NY 14853

JEWISH CURRENTS
July-August, 1997 issue

"Towards Reviving the Peace Process" and "Judaism, Secularism, Jewishness," editorials; "Here I Am—at 90!," Morris U. Schappes; "USSR Archives on Stalin's Anti-Semitism," review by Lyber Katz; "No One Must Be Forgotten," Yomtov Derbaremdiker.

Single issue: $3 (USA only).
Subscription: $30 yearly (USA only).

JEWISH CURRENTS
Dept. T, Suite 601,
22 E. 17 St., New York, NY 10003.

ART SALE

- Most illustrations, cartoons and collages appearing in In These Times are available for reprint.
- Many originals are available for purchase.
- In These Times illustrators are available for hire on a freelance basis.



Call 773-772-0100, x246, or FAX 773-772-4180

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cation containing more than 200 new job listings (in Environment, Arts, International, Health, Youth, Civil Rights, Housing, Human Services, etc.). Featuring informative articles, book reviews, resource lists, profiles of nonprofit organizations and the people who found them. Contact: Community Jobs, 1001 Connecticut Ave. NW, Ste. 838, Wash., DC 20036.

▶ PUBLICATIONS

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM–12-page reprint of debate in *Boston Review* with Ellen Miller, Russell Feingold, Steve Rosenthal, Doug Phelps, Joshua Rosenkranz, Bruce Ackerman, others. $1.50 each; bulk discounts. Boston Review, E53-407 MIT, Cambridge, MA 02139; (617) 253-3642.

▶ FOREIGN LANGUAGES

SPANISH IN GUANAJUATO—TWO weeks, $255. Instituto Falcon, Jorge Barroso, Mora 158, Guanajuato, Gto 36000, Mexico. Ph./Fax: (473) 2-36-94. http://www.infonet.com.mx/falcon.

SPANISH, CULTURE, TOURS, at Escuela Azteca. Summer in beautiful Cuernavaca. $220 two weeks. Intensive grammar all levels. Weekend tours. Minicourses with Ross Gandy, Ph.D. (Mexico: Reform or Revolution?). Live with Mexican family. For brochure: call (52-73)-15-24-69. Address: ESCUELA AZTECA, Apdo. Postal 76-005; 04201 Mexico, D.F.

A PEOPLE VACATION in beautiful Guatemala. Personalized Spanish classes at indigenous owned school. Volunteer opportunities. Fantastic excursions. R&B with local family plus 5 hrs/day of classes is $130/wk. Contact CBA, 1432 Elizabeth Street, Lexington, KY 40503, (606) 278-5008. E-mail pwuff@uky.campus.mci.net.

▶ FOR SALE

Two 17" monochrome Apple monitors. Both are in good working order and include necessary video cards. $125 each, or $200 for both. Call (773) 772-0100, ext. 239.

▶ AIR PURIFICATION

ENVIRTECH PRODUCTS, INC. "No filter" air purification systems that reduce dust, mold, VOC's, pollen, bacteria, smoke and odors. Retail $495-$995. Units for homes, offices, cars and commercial. Phone (303) 469-4537; FAX (303) 469-0421.

▶ MISCELLANEOUS

GOV'T FORECLOSED homes from pennies on $1. Delinquent tax, Repo's, REO's. Your area. Toll free (800) 218-9000, Ext. H-3077 for current listings.

SEIZED CARS from $175. Porsches, Cadillacs, Chevys, BMW's, Corvettes. Also Jeeps, 4WD's. Your area. Toll free (800) 218-9000, Ext. A-3077 for current listings.

▶ BUMPER STICKERS

"DON'T BLAME ME, I VOTED FOR RALPH." $2.50. NY residents add 8.25% sales tax. M.A.R.S. Services, P.O. Box 796, Bridgehampton, NY 11932.

▶ PERSONALS

EROTIC, INTELLIGENT, imaginative conversation—Discreet, personal and pleasurable. Please inquire (617) 661-3849.

CONCERNED SINGLES NEWSLETTER
links compatible singles who care about peace, social justice, gender equity, racism, and the environment.
Nationwide. Since 1984. All ages.
FREE SAMPLE: ✉ Box 444-IT, Lenox Dale, MA 01242; ☎ (413) 445-6309; OR 🖳 http://www.concernedsingles.com

Can a 4-page monthly paper stir up a Workers Revolution?

The **NEW UNIONIST** is trying!

We don't have space to waste so each issue gets right to the point —

- Economic, social and environmental problems can't be solved under capitalism. Fighting for a ***new system*** is the only practical course of action.
- ***Real socialism*** is not state control from the top down. It's a stateless **workplace democracy** from the bottom up.
- **One big union** of the working class — blue-collar, white-collar, pink-collar, hot-under-the-collar — will give us the economic power to fight the corporations today, and manage ***our*** economy tomorrow.
- A workers' political party with a single demand — ***The Workplaces to the Workers!*** — can educate and rally the majority for a revolution at the ballot box, the people's mandate for **Economic Democracy**.

$5 for 12 issues to:

NEW UNIONIST, 2309 Nicollet. #102-A, Minneapolis MN 55404

STUDY IN CUBA
- Language instruction at the University of Havana
- Cultural immersion
- Salsa y playa

OFFERED MONTHLY
GLOBAL EXCHANGE 1.800.497.1994

GOOD VIBRATIONS



Friendly, informative catalog of sex toys, books & videos, $4.
1210 Valencia #IT
San Francisco, CA
94110

GUATEMALA
A Reality Tour — October 10-18
Peace at Last? Witness the changes since the signing of the peace acccords. Meet the Mayan Peoples Union & campesino committees.
GLOBAL EXCHANGE • 800-497-1994

IN THESE TIMES classified ads work like your own sales force.

Word Rates:	Display Inch Rates:
95¢ per word / 1-2 issues	$30 per inch 1-2 issues
85¢ per word / 3-5 issues	$28 per inch 3-5 issues
80¢ per word / 6-9 issues	$26 per inch 6-9 issues
75¢ per word / 10-19 issues	$24 per inch 10-19 issues
65¢ per word / 20 + issues	$22 per inch 20 + issues

Classified ads must be prepaid. Send your copy, coupon, and payment to: IN THESE TIMES, Classified Ads, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647.

Enclosed is my check for $_____ for _____ issue(s).

Please indicate desired heading _____

Advertiser _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Thomas Paine
VIDEOCASSETTE

This educational, "very informative," and "fascinating" 40-minute video, written and hosted by Thomas Paine Scholar Carl Shapiro, was telecast via cable TV throughout northern New Jersey in the spring of 1992. In this original, unedited video, the essential meaning of Paine's extraordinary career as revolutionary writer and foremost exponent of democratic principles is recounted in a presentation "sure in its content" and clear in its delivery. A discussion of little-known but significant incidents in Paine's life adds immeasurably to this memorable video.

VHS cassette, $25.00 ppd. (USA)

INDEPENDENT PUBLICATIONS, P.O. BOX 102, RIDGEFIELD, NJ 07657

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Continued from page 40

"The cab driver was meaner than the warehouse foreman had been. He acted like I had asked him to murder his mama, when all I did was ask if he could take me to this little rooming house in that section of town at that time of night. I went to bed hungry, figuring things have to be better when the morning comes.

"I woke up the next day with Philly cheese steak on my mind. I was hungry enough to eat a hog on the hoof. I went to the desk clerk and asked how to get to Little Joe's on Race Street. It worked out that I should take the streetcar to this place in Little Italy.

"When I got to the car stop, there was not a soul in sight. But when the car came, three people pushed ahead of me. Me, being from down home here, I was raised to be polite, so I stepped back to let them all in. But when I got ready to get in, the driver looked me dead in the eye and pulled off without me like I was the one keeping him off his schedule. I tell you the truth, brother-in-law, I was beginning to feel like a grub worm on a chicken farm.

"I made sure to get on the next car that came. I told the driver I was trying to get to Little Italy, if he would please tell me where to get off. He says, 'I'll tell you where to get off, all right.' I rode that streetcar to the end of the line, and that man never said a mumbling word.

"Where I got off, I asked a guy on the street how to get to Little Joe's in Little Italy. He says, 'The only Italian you'll find here in West Philly will be passing through.'

"If I hadn't been so hungry, I'd have headed home to New Orleans right then. I walked into this convenience store to get a snack. Now, I'm the only one in the store. This dude working there is not doing a damn thing till I walk up to the counter, then he picks up the telephone, dials a number and starts chit-chatting. After a while, I start into a-heming and humpt-ing. Then I'm saying, 'Sir ... I beg your pardon.' When I'm just about to reach across the counter to grab this guy, he turns and looks at me like he's doing me a favor by being there. He says to the telephone, 'Hold on, baby. What you want, man?'

"I told him, 'I been standing here for five minutes, brother.'

"He says, 'So? Do you want to buy something or do you just like standing there?'

"Brother-in-law, I was completely wiped out. If it hadn't been for the fact that every single one of the people I was dealing with was black like me, I'd have been sure that I was dealing with racism.

" 'Look, man,' I told that young clerk, 'I know the time when you couldn't have bought a job in here. If it hadn't been for the fact that me and people like me wore ourselves out demonstrating and rioting when necessary, you wouldn't even have this little jive-time job in the first place. Brother, you're going to burn the bridge that got you over.' Then I turned around and walked out of there.

"People sure act funny when they get a little money, don't they?

"And don't let it be a job that carries a little prestige with it. They'll tell you quick, fast and in a hurry that they got that job because they are so well-qualified, like there were no qualified black folks before they came along," Alvin said as he returned to the stove for more gumbo.

I agreed. "Soon as these reactionary Republicans finish with affirmative action and government set-asides, guess who they going to come crying to, talking 'bout, 'Let's have a demonstration y'all, 'cause the white folks done took my job!' "

"Yeah, you're right," Alvin said. "But dig up, brother-in-law, here we ain't even talking about good jobs. This dude would have been lucky if he was making the minimum wage, and he probably wouldn't have known a union if it slapped him in the face."

"Don't be so hard on him," I told Alvin. "Did you ever get the cheese steak you were looking for?"

"Hell no! I was too hungry to look any further. I went into this little soul-food joint and sat at the counter. This woman came over and barked, 'What do you want?' I just couldn't take anymore. I cracked. That was the last straw! Down home, people don't treat each other like this. She sucked her teeth, rolled her eyes and says, 'Look, Mister, if you don't want to eat, give up your spot and move on.'

"I just shook my head and ordered greens and ham hocks with corn bread. When she came back, she practically threw the food down in front of me. I hate to admit it, brother-in-law, the food was pretty good. But I was too through with Philadelphia."

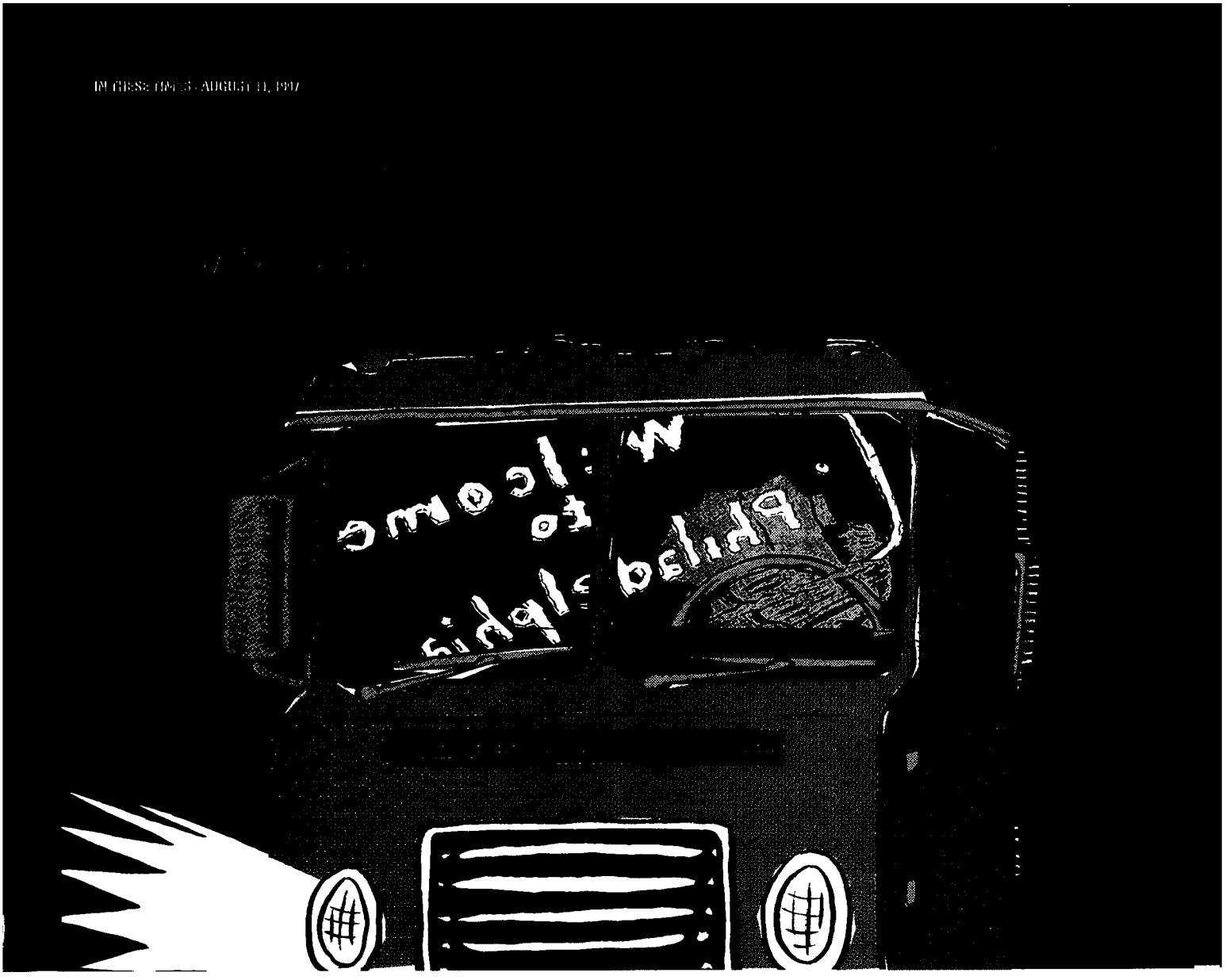
"I see why you're so down on Philadelphia, Alvin," I said. "But have you ever been to Boston? That town is worse than Philly as far as strangers are concerned. Beans aren't the only things that get baked in Boston."

"If it's any meaner than Philly, then they don't need to see me there," he said. "If I ever go back to driving trucks, I'm going to charge triple time for going to Boston." ◀

John O'Neal is an actor, writer, director and artistic director of Junebug Productions in New Orleans.

NUCLEAR TESTING • PENTAGON PORK • CLEAN AIR • TOXIC BACKYARDS •
So many concerns... so little time.
How do we begin?
20/20 VISION
Only $20 a year provides you all the information you need to take effective monthly action to preserve the environment & promote peace.
For ten years, we've been helping thousands of voices like yours across the country speak together to make a powerful difference.
Call 800/669-1782 today for free info! http://www.2020vision.org
Fill out & clip the form at right & send w/ $20 check or money order to 20/20 Vision, 1828 Jefferson Place, NW, Washington, DC, 20036. Or call 800/669-1782 w/ your Visa or Mastercard ready.
Name
Address
City State Zip

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



There's no mistaking New Orleans. If you can't get that one good look it takes to recognize the buildings, you can get the fumes of PineSol, bleach and ammonia used to fight the mildew and the funk of shrimp, crab and oyster shells in garbage cans spiked with cayenne pepper to keep the dogs and cats away. The sounds. People talking, walking. The music. Not to mention the food!

I'd just come back to town. Off telling stories in Philadelphia. It was Sunday, so I knew Mama Alice would have some fresh gumbo.

"Hey, brother-in-law. You got here just in time to keep me from overstuffing myself on Mama's gumbo," Alvin said as he served me a big bowlful of the spicy seafood stew in the kitchen where we always do our best talking.

"I bet you couldn't get no A-number-one brown-skin service like this in the so-called City of Brotherly Love," he said. "When I used to drive trucks for a living, I had a special contract. They had to pay me time-and-a-half just to drive through Philadelphia and double time if I had to stop."

I smiled. "I think that Philadelphia's something like New Orleans," I said. "Some people love it, some people hate it and there's not much in between."

"I'm one of those that hate it, then," Alvin said. "I went to Philly one time. I was really looking forward to it, too. This dispatcher in Baltimore heard me saying how I missed New Orleans roast beef debris po' boy sandwiches and told me, 'Home Boy, since you going to Philly, go to Little Joe's on Race Street and get a Philly cheese steak sandwich, and you won't miss New Orleans.' And since he was the same one that had told me about Maryland crab cakes and she crab soup, I figured he knew what he was talking about as far as food was concerned.

"The problem was that everybody I met in Philadelphia was mad at somebody else. Things started going bad as soon as I hit the city limits. I was as lost as a ball in high grass, brother-in-law. I had been lost for so long, I was afraid that the load of eggs I was trying to get to Kroger's regional distribution center would turn into a truckload of baby chicks. When I finally found the place, it was most to midnight. Due to the lateness of the hour, I figured the guys at the warehouse had good cause for irritation.

"I wasn't about to drive that 18-wheeler around those narrow streets looking for a rooming house I could afford, so I called a cab, which took another half-hour to show up.

Continued on page 39

ILLUSTRATION ©1997 KIT BOYCE

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED